

GILE, LYMAN

INTERVIEW

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Jas. S. Buchanan,
Interviewer,
October 20, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. Lyman Gile,
Haskell, Oklahoma.

I, Lyman Gile, was born in the state of Wisconsin, February 25, 1868. My parents moved to Kansas in 1870, where I was reared and lived until I came to the Oklahoma Territory.

~~September 16, 1893, I participated in the run in~~
the opening of the Cherokee strip. I registered for the run at Caldwell, Kansas. The registration was a task of endurance before the run began as there were at least 2500 people there trying to register and I stood in line one and one half days before I was able to register.

Caldwell was a place of about 1500 people at that time, and to be among the multitude of homeseekers gathering there for the registration was an exciting experience. There were people there in conveyances of every description camped on every available spot for a

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mile about the registering station.

When the registration was finally completed and preparation for the run was begun, the people were lined up along the Kansas -Territory line as far each way as I could see and in addition to the line of vehicles of every description and those on horseback, a train of stock cars on the Rock Island Railroad was provided for those who were on foot. I was one of the many who rode the train. The train was restricted to a speed of fifteen miles per hour so as to not handicap contestants using other conveyances, also to permit those riding the train to drop off at any place in the run they saw fit.

When the line was formed and everything was in readiness and the signal shots were fired for the start of the run at high noon, it was a moment in my life I shall never forget and a sight impossible to describe. At the start, the entire line of people on horseback, on foot and in all sorts of conveyances passed the train, but as the train got up speed it soon passed the majority of the other conveyances

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and when anyone on the train saw a piece of land that he thought he could reach on foot ahead of other contestants, he would jump off the train and stake his claim. There were great clouds of dust through which the crowds moved.

Many left the train all along during the run, but I did not get off until we had traveled about twenty miles when I saw a piece of land that suited my fancy and I dropped off and staked my claim about ~~four miles southwest of Medford. Medford consisted of a depot and a section house at that time.~~

I immediately began building a sod house by cutting pieces of tough sod about twelve inches wide and two feet long and building the wall the same as you would build a stone wall. After the completion of my sod house, I broke a piece of raw land and prepared it for planting the next spring, and then returned to Kansas where I stayed until February, when I returned to my claim where I remained and planted a crop that spring.

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My corn came up and I had a prospect of a fine crop, only to see it destroyed by the prairie dogs that infested that country when it was first settled. Realizing that something had to be done to destroy the prairie dogs before I would be able to raise a crop of corn, I decided to poison them, and I soaked Kaffir corn seed in water, sugar and strychnine and scattered it over my field after I had planted my crop the next spring, and I killed the prairie dogs by the thousands, and that year I raised a good crop of corn, unmolested by the prairie dogs.

I lived in my sod house until I improved my claim by building a barn, fences, etc., then I built a frame building.

In 1899, I was married to Rosella Black, the daughter of Thomas J. and Mary Black of Kansas. Eight children were born to us; five living at the time of this writing.

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I lived on the claim until 1903, when I disposed of it and came to the Creek Nation and leased some land about two miles southeast of the old Bald Hill post office which was situated about four miles southeast of the present site of Bald Hill.

In 1905, I bought the farm upon which I lived at the present time, four miles south and one mile west of Haskell.
