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Field Worker: Jennie Selfridge
March 15, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mike Gorman
203 G. Street S. W.
Ardmore, Oklahoma

BORN North Field, Minnesota
November 3, 1862

PARENTS Father, David Gorman, Cork, Ireland
Mother, Johanna Kennedy, Dublin, Ireland

I was born on the Minnesota frontier near North Field, November 3, 1862. The part of Minnesota was new country when my parents moved there in 1860. Just west of our settlement was a French colony of about two hundred families. South of us was a colony of Swedes and Norwegians, and to the east was a German colony. There was also, a tribe of Indians living near us. They were the Chippeways. I use to play with the Indian children and they taught me how to use a bow and arrow. The Chippeqays were good Indians, but were always forced on the warpath; usually with the Sioux. On one occasion the Chippeqaus went through our front yard on their way to battle, but very few of them came back.

I remember one old Indian woman of the Sioux tribe, by the name of Aunt Betsie. She was kicked out of the tribe, because she warned the white settlers of an attack the Sioux had planned on the white settlement. She would go about town every Saturday selling roots and herbs.

I also saw the Jameses and Youngers the day they robbed the North Field, Minnesota bank. They came through the little town where we lived. This was their last raid. I later met Frank James in Dallas,

Texas.

Our home on the frontier was a little one room shack.

My mother's father was a southern sympathizer. In fact he was living in the south, just before the war started. He received word to come to St Paul immediately, since his father was very ill. He went and his father died. By that time the war had started and he could not return to the South. One of my uncles fought with the Union and the other with the Confederacy.

In 1876 we left Minnesota and went to Dallas, Texas.

Minnesota was settled up when we left there. We crossed the eastern part of Oklahoma on the way to Dallas. After moving to Dallas I farmed for awhile, then taught school several years.

In 1890 I moved to Ardmore. I left Dallas, at seven o'clock one morning and arrived in Ardmore at ten o'clock the next morning and never missed a train. After moving to Ardmore I went into the furniture and undertaking business.

One day a lady came into the store accompanied by an eighteen year old boy. She had on a large sunbonnet pulled well down over her face. She bought two cots, two pillows and a mattress, and paid for them with new National bank currency. I never noticed the money much, but I had a clerk working for me at that time, who always gave money a good looking over. He examined the bills and found that none of them had been signed. We had read in the paper where the Long View, Texas bank had been robbed the before, so I carried the money over to Judge Gibbons, United States Commissioner, and he got in touch with the Long View bank, and found that the money belonged to them.

The officers found the woman and boy, and brought them

back for questioning. The woman refused to talk, but the boy said that they lived near Pooleville in a one room shack. He also said that they received the money from the woman's husband, who was hiding out at the shack. The next morning a posse was formed and started for Pooleville. The officers surrounded the shack, and the man came out shooting. He was killed by Lois Hart. After he was killed it was found that he was Bill Dalton.

Every one was so excited about it that they just pitched the body in a lumber wagon and started for Ardmore. The body was carried to an undertaker by the name of Pollock to be embalmed. Pollock started but ran of embalming fluid, so they called me, I went over and finished up the job. The body was absolutely black, it had bounced around in the wagon so much. The cabin in which Dalton was killed was torn down a year or two ago. It was located on land now belonging to Bill Higgins.

A few days after I arrived in Ardmore a Mr. Gibson invited me out to his place, west of town to eat Sunday dinner. I accepted the invitation and on the following Sunday morning walked out through the cemetery, which was then located in what is now the west part of Ardmore, and then on out to his home. Mr. Gibson, lived in a well built double log house, which was located on what is now the Tom Champion place.

We had vinson, prairie chicken and wild turkey for dinner. A few Sundays after this visit I walked out east of town one afternoon, and saw seven deer come out of the brush. The deer did not last long after I came here. They were soon all killed out. We used to go down on what is now the Lake Murray site and hunt wild turkeys.

The first residence built in Ardmore, was the Douglas house on the west side of the Santa Fe railroad right-of-way. This house was not on a street, and when the Santa Fe came through, they curved the track around the house. This house was also a log structure.

After I had been in Ardmore for about four years, I was appointed as keeper at the "Bull Pen". I never had any trouble with the prisoners. There was usually from one hundred fifty to two hundred prisoners in the yard all of the time.

I remember three occasions on which they tried to tunnel out of the yard, but they were not successful in either attempt. If a prisoner got too bad I would put him in the dungeon, and give him bread and water for a day or two; then he would be good.

Dr. Gardner was the second mayor of Ardmore was the jail physician, and we never lost a man, by sickness, run-away or hanging.

We had Al and Frank Jennings, Pat O'Malley, all train robbers, in the jail for a long time. They were finally taken to be tried, and were sent to the Federal penitentiary. They were model prisoners.

We usually sent off about two car loads, or sixty prisoners a year. These were mostly whiskey cases. All of the crazy people were sent to prison. I never had any trouble with them. The only thing was to be kind to them. I have seen crazy people brought in tied up in ropes, and every other way.

I am the only living member of the first city Administration of Ardmore. The first city council consisted of four Aldermen and a Mayor; all elected at large. John Galt was the first Mayor. In the second election the city was divided into four wards, and two members elected from each ward. Dr. Gardner was the second Mayor.

The three wells on Main street were dug while I was on the City Council. They were not really wells, but cisterns eighteen feet deep. We tried to divide them an equal distance apart down Main street. We also bought a fire engine and a fire hose. I believe it was in 1897 that we let the franchise to the telephone company.

Later a franchise was let to the light company. Dr. A. J. Wolverton, was President of both companies and was also, on the City Council. He refused to prepare the franchise, saying it might not look right for him to prepare the franchise, since he was President of the company. We had no politicians in those days.

All of the small towns had a doctor, school, Sunday School and people helped each other more. I remember only one occasion when the people of Ardmore refused to help one another. That was during a Meningitis epidemic. I went into home then and dressed corpse, when there was not a soul in the house. Even the immediate families had left.

After leaving the "Bull Pen" I went into the insurance and loan business.

I later worked in the Banker's National Bank, then the Guaranty State Bank. After that I was President of the American National Bank. I worked in the three banks twenty five years.

My father was born in 1830, died 1924.
