

5

4

HAILEY, W. E.

THIRD INTERVIEW.

5190.

Grant Foreman,  
Director,  
January 25, 1937.

Interview With W. E. Hailey,  
McAlester, Oklahoma.

#### PERRYVILLE.

Perryville was settled about 1850 by a full-blood Choctaw named Ely Perry. This location was the intersection of the north and south road between Kansas and Texas and the east and west between Fort Smith and Fort Arbuckle. However I think it was not designated as a military road until some years after Perry located.

He opened a small store, bringing his merchandise from Fort Smith. Later, Perryville became a regular overnight stop for stage and travelers and William Chunn, an intermarried citizen and his wife, Nancy, member of a very well-known Indian family on Poteau River near Fort Smith, built a double log house and opened a tavern. For several years it was a well-known and much appreciated place and parts of it were still standing as late as 1900. There were quite a few log houses built for resident home

HAILEY, W. E.

THIRD INTERVIEW.

5190.

-2-

purposes about 1870 and about that time Dr. D. M. Hailey, who had married a sister of Chum, moved to Perryville, took over the store and post and practiced medicine. Frequently he made calls fifty miles and further away, going on horseback and over mere trails.

During the war between the States there was a small engagement at Perryville between the Confederates under General Cooper and General Blunt in command of the Federals. Being splendidly located, with feed for animals and many soft water springs, it was an ideal place for encampment. There were small hills on the east, west, and north. From the north the hill drops into the valley very sharply. The Federals, in a sort of reconnaissance from headquarters at Fort Gibson, consisted of only a few companies. They took to the apex of the hill beginning just south of the present town of McAlester, and completely surprised the Confederates when they began to fire on them from the eminence just above the valley and their camp. The old Confederates, in more or less confusion, fell back, leaving much provision, equipment and livestock. The Federals

HALLEY, W. E.

THIRD INTERVIEW.

5190.

-3-

followed them to a point two or three miles south of Savanna and then returned.

In 1871 the Missouri Kansas & Texas Railway built through this section and in locating stations one was placed in McAlester and the next one south at Savanna. Perryville was only about five miles south of McAlester and hence too close for another stop so this was the beginning of the end for Perryville. At that time it was the only village in fifty miles north and south and more than one hundred miles east and west. There were no laws, no courts, and as a consequence, many cases of summary justice. This was especially true when the railroad construction camp was at Perryville.

The old site is now owned as a farm by William Cambron, a pioneer of this section, who is much interested in its history and has built a museum containing many articles of warfare found on the old battlefield. He also erected a miniature replica of the old tavern and his residence occupies a spot where the stage post stood but Perryville, as a village or an outpost of civilization, is now only a memory.