

INDEX C. RDS

Journey to Oklahoma

Weather

English, A. Z.

Potatoes

IRA S. LAWRENCE, Informant.  
Okay, Oklahoma.  
Jas. S. Buchanan.

\*\*\*\*\*

My father, W. F. Lawrence was born near Rome, Georgia, in 1851 and was reared in that vicinity. In 1873, with an uncle by the name of Woodruff, he moved to Arkansas where he was later married to Ella Jane Moorehead in Greenwood, Arkansas, in 1877. Residing on a farm near Lavacca, Arkansas; until 1889, when, with four children, they moved to the Indian Territory, where he settled ten miles east of Muskogee where he lived until 1891. He then moved to Muskogee and resided there until his death, February 26, 1937, with exception of five years he lived near Okay.

On the trip from Arkansas to the Indian Territory, due to bad roads, he was ten days making the trip of about 150 miles in a wagon. Of course there were no bridges, and streams that could not be forded were crossed by ferries and when the streams were too high for the ferries to operate, we would be compelled to wait until the water receded.

In 1893, he, with Bob Gilliam of Warner, made the run in the land opening of western territor. of Oklahoma. Being unsuccessful, he returned to Muskogee and continued farming which he had always followed.

In 1899 my father ( W. F. Lawrence ) with seventy-five acres to cotton and the same acreage to corn, all laid by and prospects never better for a bountiful crop, when there was a hail storm

2

visited his farm in July and destroyed everything, killing his chickens and crippling live stock that were not protected. This hailstorm only covered about one mile square and he was the only one suffering a loss by it. He, not being the type of a quitter, assisted by A. Z. English the owner of the land, planted forty acres to potatoes, this being a new adventure, as there never had been any potatoes planted in the vicinity of Muskogee for commercial purposes. This proved to be a very profitable crop, and year by year there were more potatoes planted until Muskogee became one of the best potato markets in this part of the country.

There were eight children in our family, five boys and three girls. Three are yet living, Carl W. Lawrence of Choska Bottom, who, as his father, has always engaged in farming and would not think of planting a crop without a great portion of it being potatoes; Nannie Lawrence Moore, wife of J. W. Moore of the Moore Drug Company at 2100 W. Okmulgee Ave. Muskogee; Ira S. Lawrence, engaged in the mercantile business in Okay since 1921.