

LAMB, CHARLES H.

INTERVIEW

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Opening-Cherokee Strip
Panic of 1893
Pioneers
Kiowa-Comanche Opening
Registration

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Effie S. Jackson,
Interviewer.

August 25, 1937.

Interview with Charles H. Lamb,
412 N. Rosedale, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The Opening of 1893. The Drawing
of 1901. A Contest.

The following statement was made by Charles H. Lamb,
life member of the Oklahoma State Historical Society.
He wished in his interview to stay away from his personal
experiences and give his general conclusion from his
memories of pioneer days.

I could tell you of the Strip Run, of teaching in
dugouts, of the founding of town-sites, of promoting
~~railroad extensions~~ in the development of western Okla-
homa; but if I may, I would prefer to contrast those two
openings of western land. The Strip in 1893, The Kiowa
Comanche Land Drawing in 1901. I was a part of both
endeavors and witnessed the struggle for home development.

In 1893, the year of the panic, marked the opening
of the Cherokee Strip. It was a time of terrible financial
distress, crop failures and bank failures. As to farming
conditions I saw horses and cattle living on straw, choked
by the beards. Horses were given away and calves were
shot. So the opening was the "sesame" to restore hope and
fortune. The people who poured in and built these towns

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over night were a fine type, well educated. School land grants and church lots were given first consideration. Debating and literary societies were formed and held in a room of some farmer's home, or if no place else in a dugout. Well built towns sprung up almost over night, in some cases hastened by a supply of ready-made houses. You see after the Wichita boom, houses there and in other Kansas towns were worthless. Many of these were torn down and brought to places like Enid and Alva which helped to establish ready-made towns.

A thought in passing-- "Why a pioneer feels as he does". He drops the cloak of his past life, all dissension and ill feelings are cast aside, he meets every one on his own level, assumes a certain responsibility as a part of a growing community, a sort of rebirth. It was a young country, new towns. The pioneers were in their youth, young people, law-abiding, clean minded and orderly. I was associated with leading men in the development of towns in the Alva, Enid, Clinton, and Hobart regions. In all these contacts lasting friendships were formed. Men had time to think in those days and sound judgment prevailed. There was sufficient isolation to give men time to think. Men of principle as these pioneers were, prized friendship

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and held it as an eternal thing. I still take the papers of those old towns now more than 40 years later, and I find that old spirit of comradeship prevails.

Now as to the Kiowa-Comanche-Caddo opening in 1901. Economic conditions were far different than 1893. They ran for a place to live then, their existence was at stake, the personal element predominated. The drawing plan was arranged to do away with contest and litigation that followed the opening of 1889 and 1893. Registration at Reno had to be personal and in that way there was no chance for criminals, everyone had to be identified. As you know there were 167,000 registrations. It is of passing interest that my brother, Leonard Lamb, drew the second ticket. After 1901 I was identified with town-lot development in the Kiowa-Comanche district, centered around Hobart.

In 1901 there was general prosperity. After the opening, people with thousands of dollars for investment poured in. Town lots were auctioned off. There was plenty of money and plenty of credit. People owned the land without effort. There was no longer the struggle of the pioneer in his day. It was capital rather than labor. They brought the money to make money. A cosmopolitan, well

educated people. So you can easily understand the Aladdin-like building of new towns with their good buildings, hotels, water works, newspapers, churches and schools.

Having been a part of both, often in a reminiscent mood, I find myself recalling the changing picture a few years wrought. The man with the hoe in 1893, his personal existence at stake. The man with the money in 1901, assisting in the general development of a new frontier. In each case a spirit of brotherly love and a thought for general welfare. That was my happy experience in my association with the laborer and the capitalist as they worked out the development of our western Oklahoma.