

HAIRSTON, J. T.

INTERVIEW

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Investigator,
Loudolphus D. Maybee,
March 17, 1938

Interview with J. T. Hairston
(Old Settler)
Pryor, Oklahoma

J. T. Hairston was born in 1862 in Mississippi. He married Naomi Morgan and came to Salina in 1888. He was a bee keeper when he first came here also a carpenter and farmer. His father L. T. Hairston was killed in the battle Chickamauga.

School and Church

The only school here then was the Salina Orphans Home for Indians started in 1872 at the residence of Lewis Ross brother of Chief Ross. It was also the only church-house. J. T. Hairston helped build the wings onto the Ross residence for the Orphans Home in 1895, when Watt Duncan was the Superintendent. During the Civil War the soldiers ransacked the Home and danced on the pianos. The home burned in 1903.

Salt Wells

In 1805 and 1806 Lewis Ross and J. Ross drilled salt wells at what is now Radium Spring, just west of Salina. These wells were eight hundred feet and were cased with cedar logs which had been split and the centers chiseled out so that when the logs were put back together there were holes four or five inches

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in diameter running through the centers of the logs. The water flowed out the top of the well all the time. This water was piped into kettles and boiled down to salt. They put fresh blood in the kettles to make the salt white and fine. The large iron kettles were brought there by Ross from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. There are pieces of those kettles left there yet.

Story of Removal

When the Cherokees were coming from Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama, they stopped in Arkansas and the great grandfather of Chief Rogers sent twelve scouts ahead and when they came near Salina on the creek they saw a man coming on horseback. They hid in the grass and when the horseman came by they grabbed the bridle of this man's horse and forced the French hunter to tell them all he knew concerning the country and the Osages who had inhabited it. After gaining all possible information they killed the Frenchman and returned to their people. The Indians then came on and met the Osages in battle on Honey Creek and the Cherokees were defeated.

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Then the next battle was at the Claremore Mound. There the Cherokees won and there they killed Chief Claremore of the Osages. That was the last battle between the Osages and the Cherokees. The Osages went west and the Cherokees inhabited this part of the country.

Lewis Ross

Lewis Ross was not only prominent here but also in Georgia and Tennessee where Rossville store and ferry were named for him. He was a friend of T. J. Hairston. Hairston was umpire of the baseball games in which Captain Welch played against the father of Earl Welch who is now a member of the Supreme Court.