

TRAYNOR, THOMAS J.

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
 Indian-Pioneer History Project - Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Merrill A. Nelson.This report made on (date) November 1, 1937. 1937

1. Name Thomas J. Traynor.
2. Post Office Address 819 W. Randolph, Enid, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) Enid, Oklahoma.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 19 Year 1874.
5. Place of birth Wexford County, Ireland.

6. Name of Father John Traynor. Place of birth Ireland.7. Name of Mother Eliza Kehoe Place of birth Ireland.

Other information about mother On relief committee for the  
pioneers; mentioned in the stories of pioneers.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached \_\_\_\_\_.

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Merrill A. Nelson,  
Investigator,  
November 1, 1937.

An Interview With Thomas Traynor,  
Enid, Oklahoma.

THE BUILDING OF SEGAR'S SCHOOL.

There were four children born to my parents; my brother, Edward, a farmer; my sister, Anna, now at Oklahoma City, who married a man by the name of Haugherty; Ella whose husband's name was Hamilton, of Denver; and myself. Both of the sisters are widows now. Brother Edward's son lives five miles south of Enid on a farm.

I came with my parents from Ireland directly to Newton, Kansas. On shipboard they told us one day that we would soon see land. We wanted to catch a view of it, even if this occurred at night, so we hid in a pipe of the steamer and our parents had a time finding us. I still remember when they found us.

We lived seven years in Newton, Kansas. My grandmother had secured a place near Newton, which was one thing which brought us over from the old country. My grandmother and uncle died when we lived in Newton.

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When a boy I remember seeing a runaway at Newton. The horses faded for a long distance in the open country. We came into old Oklahoma to make the run in 1890. We were camped at Buffalo Springs, Oklahoma, which was 800 miles north of Aleson; the fact that they sold here would allow people to come because of a shortage of the water, they said. But the morning before the run they allowed us to move up to the line which is where Highway 81 crosses the Kingfisher County line. At about a point where Highway 81 crosses the county line, my father went in a southeasterly direction about nine miles and staked a claim April 22, 1890. The reason he staked there was that it was almost level, good land with just a little rise, and there was timber nearby. There were several in his party, Sam Entickens, Johnny Brantley, and Luther Morrow, besides my father.

We boys were instructed to drive a second wagon, which held all the goods which had been piled in from two wagons, until we came to wood and water. We did so going to the famous camping place on a creek a short distance south of Norman.

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John Brantley had the misfortune to stake on the school land, and did not stay long. The rest of them secured claims and all of them raised families on their claims. Mr. Entricken, is the uncle of the two Doctors Entricken, dentists, in Enid.

There is a good deal of discussion about the location of Pat Hennessey's grave. I saw the little grave the day my brother and I went down the trail. I called him to see it. It was about twenty miles northwest of the old mill which is still there. It was just a little west of the trail. On the battlefield of the Washita, I saw a similar stone, broken in two, as that on Pat Hennessey's grave. It was marked with the Cavalry Regiment and the date of battle.

We still own the old place. It is the NE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Sec. 11, Township 18, Range 6. There were ten or twelve acres of timber but there was no water on the place. Mr. Morrow's place to the north had a small creek on it. We went there about one half mile for water.

Our place at first had a sod house which the men of our party threw up. This was the first sod house in this

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community and was thrown up in a ditch, a lot of it.

the ridge pole and rafters coming from the timber.

We ploughed up some land and in the first third furrow we have would plant corn. The boys would walk along in front of the plow and with the seed on hand. Myriads of prairie chickens were in front of this seed.

A Mr. Matwell, eleven miles southeast of Hennessey, had a cane mill, or molasses mill. This was the first sorghum mill in that country. Our photo was a barrel of sorghum. This was also the first crop in that country. There was a road running diagonally from our place to the city of Hennessey. Roads in those days did not exactly follow section lines.

After dad had made a settlement, building his dugout and ploughing some land, which took about two weeks, he returned to Kansas, leaving us two boys and Luther Morrow. He stayed about a month in Kansas and then returned. He brought mother with him to file. Then we all went back to Kansas, returning in the fall to stay.

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Our fare that first winter was scanty. I made a living hunting prairie chickens. I sometimes got a quarter for the prairie chickens. I also shot a lot of deer. In fact they were plentiful in the woods on our place, a half mile west and south. One time I sold a buck weighing 196 pounds for two dollars. I helped haul rock for the Catholic church in Hennessey, as another occupation.

My father also about this time secured the contract to help build one or more of the buildings for the famous Segar School. Green and McBride were the other contractors. My brother, sister and myself helped build this.

In 1901 I married a Miss Stella Rogers. Her folks were homesteaders too. They lived two miles east. They were real homesteaders as they lived in tents the first winter. For some reason her health failed. I took her to Colorado for her health, but to no avail. So we then brought her back to the country she loved so well, the section near her old home. How she loved to stop on her way to Hennessey with me or her little family at Turkey Creek for a little picnic lunch under the big trees. Now

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I sometimes drive out to the homestead with my second wife who enjoys the vivid red coloring in the woods about the homestead, woods so thick that when we settled there before the roads came through, it was easy to get lost. To my first wife and myself were born three boys and a girl. I shall tell you more of these later.

When we went to Kingfisher to file we caught a fawn. The greyhound we had and the other dog did not catch it. We captured it by hand. The old doe was scared off, and we took the fawn to the old sod house. For milk we had to go a couple of miles east where people had a cow. The dogs got so used to that pet fawn that they allowed it to go with them. Also whenever the dogs would see a fawn (or small deer) they would jump on its back in such a way that they did not hurt it but merely held it for us till we got there. In this way we secured five does (Does and fawn). We fed them so much milk, however, that they died.

We placed one of the fawns in the wagon and went on to Kingfisher. Mr. Luther Morrow's father found out that he could file. But he had no money. We sold one of the



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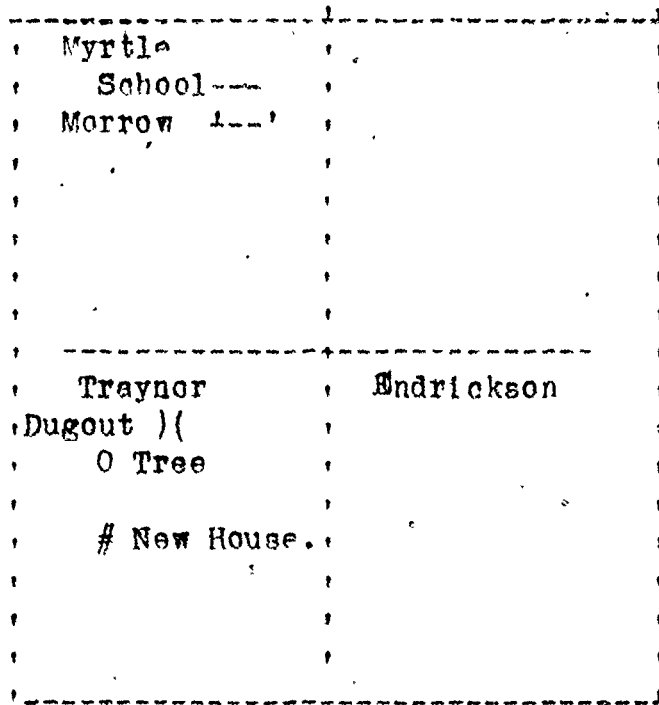
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fawns for \$10.00 and with this money he was able to file on his place. I have noticed that many had done as we did; viz, located their more modern house near the very spot where their first shack or dugout was. Our old dugout was west of a large tree in the center of the field or homestead. Later we built a larger house a little south of the tree. Both are gone now.

This is how they corner:



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Although working for Father till the Caddo-Wichita opening, about 1901 I went on the road selling machinery, and have been acting as a salesman ever since in various capacities. In July, 1901, I registered in the Caddo country. However, I failed to draw on the 6th of August. But many persons were not there at the drawing so their land was not claimed, and there was other unoccupied land. I found eighty acres of good land that no one was claiming and filed on it. After that I lived in Oklahoma City awhile in 1915 and also have lived in El Reno. My territory often covered the entire state. It was in 1916 and 1917 that we went to Denver for my wife's health.

When I went to the Caddo country I built a half dug-out with a half frame on top of that. My claim was the  $W\frac{1}{2}$  of  $NW\frac{1}{4}$  Sec 2. Twp. 10 Range 2.

I moved and lived there five years. My place was twelve miles southeast of Hinton. My brother secured a claim in the Cherokee Strip. His place was six miles east and one south of Enid.

In addition to not answering to their numbers, some did not file at El Reno. The filing was in rotation with

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the number so that if they did not file even if they drew they lost their turn within a certain time. Much land was left as I said.

There was a church one mile east and two south of my father's place. It was known as the "Barracks". It was a community church. Denominational lines were not tightly drawn in those days and everybody went, Catholic or Protestant. There is a good building and an old cemetery still there. There was another cemetery five miles north and also one a little north and also one several miles north and west. When funerals occurred, I would help make coffins, cover up the dead and assist in other ways.

When at Segars building the school for the Government I had a chance to get acquainted with the Indians. This building was of brick and two stories high. I gathered limestone from rock not far away, which we burnt for mortar; the window sills were from lumber in the nearby hills; I would take a string of long rocks (limestone) and tie them under the wagon and drag them along. Lumber other than for the window sills was hauled by or from the

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Devil's Canyon fifteen or twenty miles east of Weatherford near Hinton. This building at Segars was south of Colony on Cobb Creek.

The Indians were the real thing there. They were blanket Indians at first. Segar had a mission there and the Government built a school, also, for them.

In distributing food to the Indians, the Government would give one animal to sixteen Indians. Rabbits counted like grown ups. The bucks would do the shooting. The squaws did the rest of the work.

The Indians had some customs that were hard to understand. One time out by Anadarko, I was parked by the side of the road about midnight when a crowd of Indians shot by on horseback yelling like demons. My wife who was with me was frightened. But I know they meant no harm. Another time north of Anadarko I saw great numbers of them in groups all looking toward the east. The children had no clothes on them. This was on Sugar Creek north of Anadarko.

I used to enjoy their racing games. They loved foot and horse races there around Cantonment. They had quit

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using bows and arrows and were using rifles but no shotguns.

They used to bury their dead in trees. It was reported that they would kill dogs and eat them. It is reported that they would <sup>trade</sup> knives sometimes. Although my mother was a relief woman disbursing aid, almost no one received aid. The cattlemen were used to borrowing but the ordinary settler had nothing to borrow on. In the early days of the opening, even cattlemen could not borrow. Times were too hard.

The first school at Myrtle was a picket school, made of logs running straight up.

One day I was going along the trail and went a little ways off the trail to hunt. I saw something I shall never forget. As far north as I could see, there were covered wagons moving slowly along. Looking southward one could see at more or less even intervals other wagons moving along in one unbroken line.

Soon after the opening in old Oklahoma, there was quite an epidemic of chills and fever or perhaps malaria. It may have been caused by drinking pear water, perhaps from buffalo wallows, etc.

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My dad had the contract for carrying the mail for a while. There was an old post office on what was known as Jan Deering's place east of Dad's place, one of the first in the community. He carried mail from there to Hennessey.

Father used to raise regularly forty acres of corn on his one hundred and sixty acre homestead. It would yield from twenty five to forty bushels to the acre.