

WARD, JULIUS P.

INTERVIEW.

#6448

182

Hazel B. Greene,  
Field Worker.  
June 24, 1937.

183

From personal interview with the subject, Julius P. Ward. Wards's beer and cold drink establishment. Next door to Belmont Hotel, Hugo, Oklahoma.

SKETCH ABOUT PIONEERING.

Julius P. Ward is now sixty-seven years old. He moved from Bowie County, Texas, to Paris, Texas, in 1886, where he engaged in the furniture and hardware business. He was in the habit, from then on, of coming over into the Indian Territory on hunting trips. A bunch of them; sometimes his family and another family or sometimes just a bunch of the business men of Paris, would load up a camping outfit and come over and maybe spend a couple of weeks at a time hunting, anywhere from Red River around Roebuck Lake on up to Cloudy and Rock Creeks and Cansy Creek, over in beyond Corinne. "We would cross the river at Arthur's ferry at Arthur City; from there to Grant it was 'fierce'. It was awful the first mile and a half, boggy, swampy, trees across the so-called road, maybe where high water had carried them, or that had been felled by storms. There was so little travel over the roads in the Indian Territory, that there was no pretense of up-keep. In

the Red River bottom, north of Arthur City, we would frequently get one wagon over a bad place by hitching both teams to it, then go back and double the team to the other one, and that way take it by hitches till we would get through the bottom. Hot, and the flies and mosquitoes would nearly eat us up before we would get through, and we would get covered with ticks and chiggers, too. Sometimes it would take us four days to get up to where we would want to camp on Cloudy Creek, two miles north east of where Rattan is now. There was no Rattan then. The roads were so bad that we got so we would ride the 'local' freight train over to Grant, have all our bedding, food, guns and everything packed up, then get off and hire some old fellow with a wagon and team to take us to Roebuck Lake when we wanted to hunt down in there. "And, resumed Mr. Ward, "we could find nearly any kind of game one would want in the wilderness around Roebuck Lake. There was an abandoned cabin there, of cedar logs, supposed to have been the home of one of the Roebucks. It was a pretty good cabin, and we used to camp in it and thought ourselves lucky to

have such an excellent shelter. There were deer, turkey, squirrels, prairie chickens; and spoonbill cat fish and gars, in the lake that would weigh a hundred pounds. I have a mounted, stuffed gar that is seven feet six inches long, that I caught in Roebuck Lake when I was game warden in Kiamichi County, after I moved over here. They said there were bear in the mountains, but I never saw one alive. I saw plenty that had been killed up about Clayton and Talihina. I saw three bears at once that were killed up about Clayton. There were panthers, too, up there. The first year I was in Hugo, I saw hanging in a meat market, on West Main street in Hugo, six deer, thirty turkeys, and a bear. The meat was for sale.

After the roads were better, along toward 1890 and on, we could drive from Paris, Texas, to Goodland railroad station by good dark, if we would start early and the day was long. We did that once, and got to Dr. Kendrick's place by dark. Next day we went on and crossed Kiamichi River at the Birdsong ford and went on up on Cloudy Creek. Grant then consisted of one little shack, about 18' x 20', belonging to Basil Gooding.

He was Postmaster, and store keeper. He had about a dozen cans of sardines, a box of crackers, a few boxes of snuff, etc. We did not buy anything of him much, we usually brought with us everything, even 'snake bite medicine.'

Some times we would run out of something and try to get it at Grant, but could hardly ever get what we wanted, he handled so few things. That must have been in about 1885 or 1886 or 1887, not long after the Frisco Railroad came through here. Gooding was the first Postmaster at Grant. Of course that is a matter of record.

O yes! There was a rundown orchard at this cabin at Roebuck Lake and there was usually some ripening fruit there for us to feast upon. They used to have all day big meetings, and sometimes weeks of protracted meetings at Goodland Mission church, and we would some times go over there on Sundays, if we happened to be over in here within reach. And of all the good things to eat, they would have them at those dinners on the ground. That first church and dormitory were of logs, and one sixteen foot room was plastered.

I claim that I have pioneered along with the oldest. I rode the first mule street car ever operated in Dallas,

Texas. I built the first two story house in Hugo, the original town of Hugo, then called Raymond. I had my lumber shipped from Paris, Texas, to Goodland station and had it hauled by wagons, and had six carpenters come over from Paris with it, in order to get my house quickly built. It was a two story house, furniture, hardware and undertaking establishment down stairs, and the upstairs was used for church, school, lodges, and even dances. I built the stairway outside and left it open to the public. At the same time, J. J. Thomas of Talihina was selling goods in a big old tent, I believe, before my store was built. Hugo was on the boom then. Bailey Springs was Postmaster, first. An attempt was made to name the town Raymond, officially, but there was another Raymond, or something similar in Oklahoma or Indian Territory, so Mrs. W. H. Darrough, Sr., named it Hugo for the writer, Victor Hugo, I believe.

I was a member of the first Council in Hugo, Indian Territory. It was in August, 1901. My family and another family came over here on a hunting trip, stayed a few days, and on our way home, we got permission to camp in a new house up on the hill; about where Leslie Byrns' home is located in the south part of town, at that fine

well of water. This house was being built by Uncle Billy Spring, and was not completed but our baby was little, and we wanted to camp that night in the house for some reason, maybe a cloud came up or something. Uncle Billy was living in his old log house still, and nearer to the well. There was no sign of any town or prospect of one then. We went on home and, in a day or two, I read in the paper that a right-of-way was being surveyed for a railroad from Ardmore to Arkansas. I got on the train, came over to Goodland station, hired a team and buggy, drove down here, and looked the desolate, grass-covered, haw-thicket prairie over. I saw no sign of anything unusual. I saw sitting in my buggy, which I had hired at the livery stable of J. J. Terry, and looking across the prairie. Across the north was a hill, with an Indian hut or two on it. That is now Terry Hill in Hugo. To the northeast was a cotton patch, just about in front of the present City Hall, down past Watson's blacksmith shop, and to the site of the Court-house, about ten acres in all, and just about where the first Baptist church now stands was one of the most beautiful grove of trees I ever laid eyes upon, and a pretty good house, belonging to J. C. Kirkpatrick.

Whether or not he lived there I do not know. North of that was Kirkpatrick's pasture fence, just about where the high school now stands, extending east and west. The balance of the view was open glade, I still saw no sign of a railroad. I was in the shade of some bois d'arc trees, just looking, about where second ward school building now stands, when I saw a man coming across the prairie. He came on to my buggy, and told me that he was lost. I told him that I was also. Then he told me that his name was Enoch Needham. That was the way we met. His brother-in-law, J. J. Thomas of Talihina, had sent him down to see about this purported town.

In a few weeks the railroad was actually under construction, the railroad station or depot was moved down here and building begun.

Enoch and I were members of the first council, and he was the second Postmaster. Bailey Springs' father, Levi Springs, claimed the land which is now Ward 1 of Hugo, and Bailey sold it out in lots at from \$25.00 to \$50.00 each and just gave the purchaser a quit claim deed. (I have some of my old ones now). Then the town grew up like a mushroom, almost over night. J. J. Thomas soon built a store building and then when the town moved over



to the east side of the railroad, he moved it over there and it was the old Freeman Hotel. The first hotel was the Eagle, and was operated by Frank Hopkins, a white man, who had married an Indian girl. The hotel was composed of a number of tents. The construction crews had their own tents, but some of the workmen had to board elsewhere. Anyway Hugo was soon a "boom" town.

J. C. Kirkpatrick, Joel Spring and John Hastings started the townsite on the east side of the railroad. The Eagle Hotel was just about where the Hugo Bottling Works is now located. Then they had a big political fight as to the location of the post office. It was located on West Main Street in what is now Ward 2, in a two story store building made of sheet iron which was afterward moved to the east side and was the J. J. Thomas building, and it was turned into the Freeman Hotel.

Old man Jim Ursery was County Judge of Kiamichi County, Henry Sanguin was Sheriff and Lee Ratliff was a deputy, I believe. They would ride into town each day and hitch their horses to the hitch rack in front of my store and sit on my store porch all day. I always had company. There was a big watering trough in the middle

of Main Street just as soon as we got water works. For a long time we drank well-water, and some enterprising men made livings hauling water from wells and selling it out by the barrel. Scores of people had homes and no wells for a long time. Some never did dig wells because we got the water works.

At heart I am a pioneer. I love pioneering, I get a thrill out of it. I am a collector of relics. I have six pair of native deer horns mounted; one set of Mexican deer horns; two mounted heads, a collection of several guns of different makes and ages, among them a muzzle loading shot gun of 1836; a combination tomahawk and peace pipe, which belonged to Governor Duke; another peace pipe made of <sup>a</sup>very large cob, and curved cane stem; another one with cane stem and a carved, ugly Indian head. I don't know the history of many of these things, I bought the most of them. I have two plaster of Paris Indian heads, supposed to be of Indian Chiefs. I don't know that they are. I have a Russian poison dagger. My father bought it from some Turks who were with Sells Brothers show, and it was supposed to have been used in the Armenian trouble, and was very old then. I have a short dagger that an Indian boy made for me, in

a beaded scabbard. I also have a stone hammer, tied on to the handle with a raw-hide thong. I also have an old knife that looks to be of Spanish or Mexican make, which was found on the South Canadian River, south of Purcell, at the opening of the Johnson Ferry, during the Sac and Fox "run" in about 1889. It is a great long hunting knife, and is certainly antique. It has a horn handle and looks like steer or cow horn. Bill Little, Deputy United States Marshal for the Eastern District of the Indian Territory, gave it to me. The combination tomahawk and peace pipe, which belonged to Governor Duke, is of steel or iron, hickory hollow handle, and cane mouth piece. The hammer part is the pipe bowl. I have a pair of Indian ball sticks, too. I have a cane which was carved by an eighty-six year old Indian, W. A. Solon, of Battiest. He made it and gave it to me. I've had it twenty-five or thirty years. The head of the stick is the image of an ugly face. Deer heads, a steer head, heart, spade, diamond and club, a square and compass, and his name and age decorate this hickory stick. I have mounted ringed-neck Chinese pheasants, a cockerel and a hen; also giant hornet and wasp nests.

Then I have a lot of beaded souvenirs. A wampum <sup>a</sup> belt, or that is what they called it, about/six inch band of white beads, to go around the neck. The ends connect with a sort of an apron, made double to form a pocket. It is all beaded in vines and flowers, twenty pounds of beads. A lady's belt, beaded with catgut. And a beaded buckskin suit, made by Comanche Indians. Coat, chaps, moccasins and war bonnet of Eagle feathers.

The stuffed gar-skin that I have, which is seven feet six inches long, I caught in Roebuck Lake in 1912, and there are plenty of them in there yet; also plenty of the hundred pound spoonbill cats.

Now about that Post Office fight. The Postoffice was in the back of J. J. Thomas' store on West Main Street in the original Hugo. Bailey Springs had the appointment, and Enoch Needham was acting Postmaster. In front of the store was a stock of general merchandise. Thomas, himself, had a bank and was president of it, on the corner west of the store. No doubt, J. J. Thomas was a leader in the affairs of Hugo. Farris was the name of his youngest daughter and that was the name submitted for the town, as was also the name of Raymond. But there is a Farris in the Indian Territory, and a

Raymond, or something similar, so they were not seriously considered.

The Indians had a custom, it might have been courtesy, or a law, I don't know which, that they would not settle a place within a quarter of a mile of another. They would "give each other elbow room", so to speak. Well, Old Uncle Levi Spring owned that meadow where Ward town is now. J. J. Terry up on the hill north of that, and J. C. Kirkpatrick had his cotton patch and pasture to the east. So some enterprising 'slicker' got to Kirkpatrick and told him that the east side of the track was the logical place for a town, and how he could get rich by promoting a townsite on the east side, but he would have to 'line up' with them. Kirkpatrick demurred for quite a while, remembering the courtesy due Uncle Levi Spring, but they showed him how progress necessarily made obligations, such as the quarter mile one, obsolete. So he lined up with them. R. L. Overstreet, John Hastings, Joel Spring and others banded together and built the town on the east side of the Frisco Railroad tracks.

"But," continued Mr. Ward, "a town is not much of a town without a post office, so then they began to scheme to

get the post office over on the east side. Naturally the people on the west side did not want it moved so they opposed the removal. One night some one stole the post office and took it over to the building about where the Hugo Daily News Office is now located. A post office Inspector came and ordered it returned. Of course nobody knew who brought it over here, but Joel Spring obligingly took it back to where it belonged. Then the promoters of the East Side town conceived the idea of buying out J. J. Thomas, the "Bell Weather" of the flock. They bought his store, goods and all; and his bank, brought it over and established it in a building on the lot north of Ward's Ice Cream Plant. Made J. J. Thomas President. The post office was then ordered moved over here. They cut the old big store in two and brought it over; and every thing went lovely after that. Thomas' family resided in the big old store building for a while; then an ambitious lady took it over and converted it into the Freeman Hotel. A new president was put in the bank and Thomas returned to his neglected real estate business at Talihina.

The old passenger depot had been moved down here on a couple of flat cars and served as a passenger depot

here for several years. That old thing was full of history and bullet holes that were made when Bill Luther was shot to death in it. There was also a bench out on the back side of it that was used to hold obstreperous prisoners. This bench was made on a couple of cross ties set upright in the ground and sunken so deep that the bench was just about the right height to sit upon. Then holes were bored in the top of each and an iron bar was run through both. Then the bench was above that. Old Dick Roebuck, a negro Deputy United States Marshal, would arrest negroes and Indians and spackle them to that iron bar, and that served for a calaboose until one was built in Hugo. That old depot served for a Union depot until our fine trick one was built. Then it was used again after the new one burned and another one was under construction. But before the new one burned and after the second one was built it served as a freight depot. It was demolished about two years ago.

We old-timers hate to see land marks disappear. That old store building of J.J. Thomas' on the west side of town was partly built out of the old Harvey House at Talihina.