

WANTLAND, NANCY TRAILER

INTERVIEW

4838

106

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4839

Interviewer, Robert H. Boatman,
July 14, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Nancy Trailer Wantland,
Purcell, Oklahoma.

Born November 1, 1864, Alabama.

Parents William Trailer, Georgia
Mary Nailley, Alabama.

When I was five years old my father and his family left Alabama by steamboat and traveled up the Alabama River on their way to Texas and after spending seven years in Texas we traveled again by boat to Shreveport, Louisiana. They hired a man and some teams to bring us to the Indian Territory.

We were seven days on the road and finally settled in the Chickasaw Nation near the Washita River just a mile and a half northeast of old White Lead and here we farmed for three years.

We raised cotton, corn, and some oats, and we also raised cattle and hogs although farming was done on a very small scale compared with the farming of today.

-2-

At the end of three years of farming we went to Pauls Valley and then to Wynnewood.

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was built to Wynnewood in the year of 1886. Wynnewood was a small town of perhaps a hundred inhabitants in the Chickasaw Nation and the buildings were mostly log buildings, though with the coming of the railroad the town grew up rapidly.

I was married to Mr. Wantland and in 1887 the railroad was built on north to Purcell and from Newton, Kansas, south, connecting at Purcell. The way of transportation before the railroad was built was by a stage line that came from A+oka, a town in the Choctaw Nation through by Sulphur, Wynnewood, Davis, Anadarko to Fort Bill.

Sulphur was then only a big cottonwood log driven into the ground with some knot holes for the water to run out of.

When the railroad was being built on to Purcell,

Mr. Wantland established a supply store between Purcell and Payne where we kept supplies for the railroad men, principally groceries and clothing.

With the establishment of a depot at Purcell, a town grew up over night. It was a tent town at first, then log buildings and frame structures were built and Purcell

WANTLAND, NANCY TRAILER, INTERVIEW.

4838

-3-

continued to grow until 1897 when a fire broke out and utterly destroyed the whole town and there was only a very few buildings left, after which time stone and brick buildings were erected.

Mr. Wantland conducted the second store ever erected in Marshall and continued in the mercantile business for several years. We have lived here since 1887 and expect to remain here the rest of our lives.

The first doctor I remember here in the Territory was a Dr. Shirley, a man who had been adopted by the Cherokee Indians. He was a good doctor and very successful and was the man who located and helped to settle the town of Cherokee.

On June 17, 1887, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe was completed and we held a celebration.

We have had a celebration on this date every year since 1887.