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Mr. Whitworth sent the following  
account of his pioneering experiences; 450

I came from Danville, Harper County, Kansas, September 16th, 1893. Just myself and mother, Louisa T. Whitworth, in a one seated buggy, and buckboard cart, to the Eagle Chief Valley, which was the camp of Major Drumms cattle ranch.

Six of my family group living. Myself and wife, Hattie Whitworth, Louisa Baker, Etta Moser, and sons Harry and Ernest. My oldest boy, Lester Ray, was with us. He died during the World War, as a soldier. Yes, there were nine in the group who made the run by buggy, horseback, and light spring wagon. We made the run from Kiowa, Kansas, on the morning of Saturday, September 16th, 1893. Leaving there five minutes before 12-a.m. the appointed time, a false alarm being given and away we went, nothing could stop us. We landed at our present location, in the Eagle Chief Valley, at 2:45 p.m. and by 4:00 p. m. had our numbers of our land we wanted. By 10:30 a.m. Monday, the 18th, we had our filings made, on our land, then returned to Kansas to make preparations to move down and occupy same as our home.

My first home was a typical old fashioned

dug out, 12X14. Furniture consisted of table, chairs, bedstead, cupboard, and stove, which made the same very crowded. Our water came from a spring on Eagle Chief  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile away. Fuel Wood, of which we had plenty, was picked up along the creek. Improvements the first year or two were very scant. Finally, I got enough finance to build a frame house, 14X14, and commenced to live a new life of comfort.

I took out a Notary Public Commission, more to accomodate Civil War Veterans, in executing pension papers, being the only one for 25 miles around, and on expiration of commission, never renewed same. My office was in my dug out, and later in my frame house.

My first improvement was a pasture, fenced by wire, for my milk cows and horses. Broke land for crops the first spring, 1894, raising some feed of corn and kaffir which helped the winter stock. Kept on breaking land till I had forty acres, 28 of which, I sowed to wheat of Oregon May variety that made 28 bushels to the acre,

and got \$1.15 per bushel, after hauling same to Kiowa, Kansas, 30 miles away. We commenced to think we were real farmers, having a good bunch of milk cows, plenty of chickens, hogs, and plenty of horse flesh to operate the farm.

I finally squared out a piece of ground for orchard, and planted forest trees of mulberry, box elder, and cottonwood, which made a protection for my house against storms, and also protected my orchard, which later helped out on revenue.

Early churches were conducted in groves, till finally Eagle Chief Townsite was laid out of 40 acres, when the Methodists built a small building and conducted services. This was the only denomination having a building for several years, till Carmen was laid out, when all denominations built churches.

Our first school was in a sod house, two miles away. I had three children attending. We had a very efficient teacher in the early days, Mrs. S. V. McGreevy, who was finally elected County Superintendant of Woods County and served

till Statehood, and is still living.

Our early day parties, included platform dances, to old time music, "Coming through the Rye", and "Hot time in the old town tonight".

Early weddings were most remarkable, when compared with the weddings of today. Bright looking calico were #1 wedding dresses, and blue overalls men's paraphernalia, and buggies, two wheel carts, and wagons, their methods of transportation, and no honeymoons included, but buckled to work at once, to make things, to make a living. These weddings were so plentiful, in the early days, that the kiddies since born, now include 80 percent of the population.

In the early days between the opening of the Cherokee Strip, 1893 and 1900, the Populist Party controlled the politics of Woods County, and had no place to meet, only under the canopy of Heaven. It took 160 acres of land to accommodate them. Augusta, being in the center of the County, generally got the conventions.

Everybody brought their bedding along, with their food supply, to be sure of a place to sleep, and something to eat. Alva, being the county seat of old Woods County, The last big convention was held in Augusta, in 1899, being the Populist convention to elect delegates to the National Convention at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and I was one of the delegates elected. Oklahoma was entitled to nine delegates, but being a Territory, was not entitled to a vote for President, until after Statehood in 1907. The main question at the convention was to endorse a resolution for free homes, and we won out.

After the opening of the strip, every 160 acres had a settler on same, and made business good. But after the passage of the Free Homes Bill, they commenced proving up, which resulted in extravagance. By mortgaging their land, they brought on foreclosures, which resulted in the accumulation of land in a few years, to the detriment of the country. By the use of motor power, one man does the

work of several men, and as a consequence, merchants suffer for trade, which is eliminating all small towns, and establishing big trade centers.

Our difficulties in early days was to rustle a living, by such methods as rustling cedar posts of rough government lands, which caused us some trouble with the U. S. Marshals looking after the Government interests. Such posts, at that time, helped out by some ready cash by hauling them to Kansas, and trading at home for eatables, also selling stove wood, and rustling bones, all of which were legal tender in those days. Then we got to raising crops; some had a few cattle and horses that helped out on revenue and got by that way.

The End.

A. T. Whitworth

Carmen, Oklahoma.

P. S. I am the oldest settler in the old Woods County Territory, as far as filing is concerned, Filing #17, as all prior to that have left their claims.