

Mr. George W. Wyss, Interview

By

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Mr. George W. Wyss was born in Switzerland in 1849, came to America in 1851 and came to Oklahoma from Missouri in 1893.

I made the run in 1893 in a wagon west of Perry and four days later came to Pawnee and located on my homestead seven miles northwest of Pawnee. I was a juror in Federal Court held in the upstairs over what is now the First National Bank in Pawnee. This was the first stone building erected in Pawnee. Later, I was a juror in cases from the Osage Nation which were brought over here.

I was a freighter and hauled the lumber to build our home from Red Rock in 1894. This was the closest railroad to Pawnee at that time.

In 1894, hay was baled and hauled to Perry for three dollars a ton; corn sold for 12¢ to 14¢ a bushel, eggs sold for 3¢ a dozen, butter was 5¢ a pound and cream sold for 12¢ a pound.

Beginning in 1895 and for several years thereafter, we raised castor beans and flax. We hauled these to Perry and

and sold the castor beans for 90¢ to 1.00 a bushel and the flax seed for 90¢ a bushel. The flax was cut and bound with an ordinary binder, shocked and later threshed with the threshing machine. The hay was then fed to the horses and cattle.

I freighted from Pawnee to Perry and Red Rock. There were no improved roads and the trip took two or three days. We always tried to take a load each way. We traveled from sun up until long after sundown, then made camp for the night. There were usually several wagons among each group of freighters and the supper hour would be spent swapping tales of our experiences. We broke camp early and were on our way. There were no improved roads and streams had to be forded. The first bridges were built by donation of work and funds.

The first school house that was built in this neighborhood was in district number 65 and named Mound Center. It was a frame building 30' x 40' and was financed by a \$145.00 bond issue for 10 years and by donations of work. The first few years the term lasted only three months with a salary of \$25.00 per month. The school house was used for all community gatherings. Sunday School was held occasionally.

The different Indian tribes often came to visit the Pawnee tribe and one of the trails they used came by our house. They often stopped at our house to water their horses and sometimes to get food. Most of them were very friendly.

Cemeteries were established soon after the openings but many were buried in unnamed graves.

COMMENTS

I did not get an interview with Mrs. Wyss at this time. She did not feel like going into detail about her work but she invited me to come back later and she would give me an interview then.