

JACKSON, EFFIE S.

MEMOIRS OF J. M. HALL #13147

333

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Effie S. Jackson,
Journalist.
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From- Memoirs of J. M. Hall.

Material from the files of the late Mrs. J. M.
Hall-1801 Admiral Blvd.- Tulsa, Oklahoma.

In the last interview I had with Mrs. J. M. Hall a few weeks before her death, February 1st, 1938, she gave me some articles Mr. Hall had written about the time Tulsa was fifty years old. Mrs. Hall said that her husband was not satisfied with the book "The Beginning of Tulsa" which he had compiled and had hoped to write a detailed account of local history. He did very little toward this- just a few reminiscences- told as follows in Mr. Hall's words:

Tulsa has now reached a turning point I had never dreamed could happen--the half century mark. By August 7, 1882, the railroad to this terminus was completed and a small depot erected. A few merchants and a handful of railroad workers made up the population. Tulsa boasted one house, that of an Indian, Noah Patridge, about where 10th and Main is today, otherwise it was a tent-city- boarded floors and sides 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 feet high with a tent top. Today; in 1932, I believe I am the only living

JACKSON, EFFIE S. MEMOIRS-J. M. HALL. 13147

-2-

person left who was here when the town was laid out
(1882). The white residents then were Chauncey A.
Owens; George Bullette, T. J. Archer, Dr. Newlin and
Antwyne Gillis.

The history of the Halls has in a way been the
history of Tulsa. My brother, H. C. Hall, selected the
location and built the first store here-- I consider
him the founder of Tulsa. My brother foresaw the
"natural" location of a town. The land belonged to
the Creek Nation in common and could be farmed by any
Creek who desired. Their land leasing relations with
whites were liberal. There was plenty of game in the
timber, streams of fish. Trappers could rely on good
furs- wolves, racoon, opossums, skunks in abundance.
The river bottom was full of walnut timber and coal
lay just below the surface on the east of the new
townsite. The greatest industry was the flourishing
cattle trade--here was the center of the grazing land
and home of the famous tall, bluestem grass. Only one
railroad had penetrated the Indian country (until 1882),
that was the M.K.&T. from near Chetopa, Kansas, to

-3-

Denison, Texas. It was the plan of the Atlantic and Pacific (now Frisco) to open a new line from Vinita west through the rich cattle country. That resulted in Tulsa becoming the terminus.

The contractors who built this new railroad line for the Atlantic and Pacific, were H. C. Hall and C. M. Condon of Oswego, Kansas; B. F. Hobart of Springfield, Missouri, and O. B. Cunn of Kansas City. Mr. H. C. Hall looked after the payrolls and bought supplies for the store for the use of the men who were working on the road. There were no stores or towns between Vinita and the Arkansas River at that time. I had charge of the tent store. The tent store moved forward as construction did. The first group of men that the St. Louis agency sent us to Vinita (our starting point) was a collection of seventy-five dirty bums. They unloaded them at Vinita, dirty and hungry--no bedding and few clothes.

We marched them from the railway station to a hall we had rented where groceries, work clothing, tents and tools had been gathered. Then we marched them over to

another old empty building and gave them bales of hay. After they had eaten they bedded themselves down like horses. Negroes fried the bacon and cut the bread, the crew did the rest. It was January, 1882--plenty of snow. The men had to loaf--~~too~~ cold to work. They were cross because they had no liquor and soon they melted away with the snow. A new crew was hired and J. E. Thomas, chief engineer, had his men set grade stakes beginning at Vinita and construction was under way. From January to August rails were laid - until Tulsa was reached.

Thomas, as engineer, had the grading done for a side track before the paymaster and supplies reached this end of the line. This grading was located about where Lewis Avenue now crosses the Frisco, and it was Thomas' intention to place the new town at that point - 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of present Main Street.

When we reached here my brother, H. C., suggested running the townsite farther west, for it happened that Thomas' site lay in the Cherokee Nation and the Cherokee laws prohibited a white man (other than an inter-married citizen) from engaging in business in the Nation. Thomas

saw the wisdom of this and extended the tracks west to the present location on Main Street in the Creek Nation.

Creek laws were liberal to white men engaging in business. Thus began Tulsa's Main Street. The road was laid and a two-stall roundhouse built on the right-of-way fronting east on what is now Boulder, a section-house was built on the north side of the track, a depot was built and a stockyard constructed.

Chauncey A. Owen, who had been furnishing beef to the men on the road, put up a boarding tent, or rather his wife, Aunt Jane, did. They had a large ranch that supplied plenty of beef. This boarding tent was on the east side of Main, on the corner facing the depot. T. J. Archer put up a tiny store in a tent on the Frisco right-of-way, close to Aunt Jane's boarding tent. Later Archer changed this to a tin shack and in time it became a leading store in its permanent location between the Frisco track and First street, on the side of Main. Other tent stores were "set up" for trade.

My brother, H. C. Hall, put up the first permanent store. It fronted east on Main (lots 1, 2, and 3, Block 71),

200 feet south of the Frisco tracks. It was a one-story, frame, 25 x 80, a 16 foot lean-to on the north, a 12 foot lean-to on the south, lumber sheds and farm implements on the west. Later he raised this to two stories and enclosed it with a fence. The large trade territory seemed to justify the investment. While there were few white people yet there was a large trade territory. It extended from sixty miles west to the Sac and Fox agency, to Coffeyville on the north, Okmulgee on south, Vinita and Muskogee on east and southeast. There was a good cow ranch trade, Halsell's large ranch to northeast (all land where Owasso and Collinsville are now and north almost to Bartlesville). This gave a substantial cowboy trade; there were soon hundreds of them on surrounding ranches.

The principal trade at first was with the Indians, negro trade ranked next and white third; the whites were only here by permission of the Indians. Eventually my brother's stock represented an investment of fifteen to twenty thousand dollars.

Indians exchanged hides and furs for staples. Indians made a good grade of buckskin from deer found in the timber

-7-

near here. Furs were plentiful; turkeys and prairie chickens were shipped to St. Louis, Chicago and New York by the thousands. Sugar came to us by hogsheads. We packed the barrels down tight with prairie chickens - feathers and all, they would keep in the winter time, and sent them north. Chickens, fat from feeding on acorns, brought good prices.

It was a time of barter economy. Indians brought in venison hams, wild turkeys and pecans and traded them for dry goods, clothing and groceries. A good line of boots, shoes, hardware, furniture, farm implements, lumber and coffins was handled. Walnut logs and coal were shipped to St. Louis markets. One of the early stores was put in by Josiah Perryman and "Has" Reed" at the southwest corner of Main at First; later they sold it to R. N. Bynum, then to Crawford, who moved it upon Main between 2nd and 3rd, east side. He sold it to Abbot, then Haliburton-Abbot at Fifth and Main, now Sears at Fifth and Boulder, oldest store in Tulsa.