

HARRIS, R. J.

INTERVIEW

4173

287

INDEX CARDS:

Big Pasture
Frederick

HARRIS, R. J. INTERVIEW.

Ruth Lee Gamblin, Field Worker
Indian-Pioneer History
May 25, 1937

288

Interview with Mr. R. J. Harris
of North 9th Street, Frederick,
Oklahoma.

I was born in Germany in July 1853, but I came to America and located in Ohio when a boy. I afterwards lived in Illinois and moved to Texas and then moved to Frederick August 1, 1905.

I came to Frederick for the purpose of establishing a cotton gin, which I did soon after I came. At that time this was the only gin in this locality and we had to run night and day. Four years later another gin was established.

In 1906 Mr. Foster and myself established a light plant together with the gin with a capital of \$30,000. The officials were as follows: J. T. Lively, President, Mr. Hart Vice-President; S. J. Mathis, secretary, and I was treasurer and manager. In city lighting this plant has a good record, having lost but two nights run from the time we started it. At first we charged eighteen cents K.W., then came down to fifteen cents. We also had a flat rate which was \$1.25 per month for individuals. Those who used more received a discount. We only used this plan three or four months because it caused hard feelings.

2

We then put in meters. People were afraid they were being robbed.

The building of the company was located on a two and one-half acre plot of ground by a fine artificial lake. Later a large light and power house was built and equipped with what at that time was the newest and most modern machinery at a cost of \$20,000.

We furnished lights to industries and homes of the city and the system made it one of the best plants of the kind in the country in the early years. It was really a hard proposition as the people were not accustomed to electricity.

We kept this plant fifteen years, then sold it to the city of Frederick for \$30,000.