

CARLISLE, CHARLIE . INTERVIEW

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Interview with Charlie Carlisle
Cordell, Oklahoma

Investigator - Ida B. Lankford
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I came from Harrold, Texas, October, 1894, in a covered wagon; was on the road eight days. Filed on land within two months after I came; this land was located five miles south of Cordell.

There was not much of Cordell here at that time. H. D. Young had a general merchandise store and Aunt Tilda Smith had a hotel and was also in charge of the post-office. Jobs were very hard to find during this time.

I walked four miles to pick cotton, then went to Cloud Chief and worked in the first gin that was in Washita County, I worked here until January 1, 1895.

I served as deputy sheriff and jailer of Washita County, under Sheriff Neil Morrison, starting in January, 1895. I am one of the early law enforcement officers now living here in Washita County. Harve Dean is another deputy; he later served as sheriff for many years.

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I worked as jailer for about three months and then was placed as field deputy. In my first work as deputy I was sent to Cordell to quiet some cowboys at a town dance. I thought I was handling them all right until twelve or one o'clock; then the town boys and cowboys matched a fight. I showed my authority and told them that they were under arrest. Instead of quieting down, they played football with me for about thirty minutes; I came out later with a broken nose, a mashed hand, and with blood all over me.

I went back to Cloud Chief, disgusted with myself, arriving there about three o'clock I knocked on the door of the sheriff's office, Neil Morrison and Joe Haws were taking care of it. They asked, "Who is there?" I told them so they let me in. I went on to bed and I told them I would quit my job but they laughed at me and called me a yellow coward. I got my nose fixed and the next morning I went to the Verales Ranch and brought the boys into town; then we were all great friends.

Our biggest job was catching horse-thieves. They would go south of Washita County, into Kiowa

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County, and hide in the mountains.

I served on the law force for three years.

Singletary, a deputy sheriff at Old Combs, was shot and killed by Sid Davidson, a cattle-man.

In 1889, Morris was undersheriff; he received a gun wound on his chest which later caused his death. Also, in 1889, Mountain View townsite was located in Washita County.

Our jail was in the courthouse and it failed to hold several of the criminals, especially one of the first killers, who murdered his sister. This man lived near Old Burns which is now known as North Burns. He was Taylor Kurk, who whittled a hole in the wall of the jail and escaped, fled over the country into Texas, and here he was recaptured and brought to El Reno, to court; here he was sentenced to death but a new trial was ordered and then he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The only way to get along with the cowboys was to be kind to them and if you were not kind to them there would probably be a killing.

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When we first came here there was no fuel closer than El Reno, so we would go over the prairies and gather cow chips and let them dry and burn them with big ears of corn. Sometimes we would take a chance and "rustle" wood from the Indians; "rustle" in those days meant the same as stealing.

After quitting the law force, I went to work for C. E. Sumners in a grocery store and still there were hardships.

Men would come to the store and say, "I have a cow, two horses, a family, a dugout and nothing to eat and no money to get anything with" and they would ask Mr. Sumner to "run" them until they could lay a crop by. He never turned one down and never lost an account on a man of that kind but won their kindness and friendship.

One of my experiences with the Indians was while I was on the law force. I was sent out to arrest five Indians and I was caught in a rain and sleet storm. I rode till dark and lost my way, then I came upon some Indian tepees. I asked if I could

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stay all night, they said, "No, pale face can't stay here," and told me to go on down the road farther and an Indian would let me stay. I rode on to the Indian's place and asked him if I could stay, he told me "No," so I told him that I was all wet and wanted to stay till my clothes got dry. He asked me to come in and asked me what my name was and what my business was so I told him that I was hunting five Indians and I gave him their names. He had me put on his clothes while mine dried and said, "Let us go down to the other Indian tepees."

When we got to the tepees, the Indians were in a social smoke. The chief would fill a big pipe with a long stem and all would sit in a circle and each one would smoke, then pass the pipe to the next one. I told them my business; they began talking but I could not understand them. The Indian who was with me said, "Let us go back to my shack and all five of the Indians will be there in the morning."

The next morning all five of these Indians came riding up to the shack and I was so turned around I

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didn't know the way back to town. They told me to follow Ode Harry so we set out for Cloud. I was riding behind the Indians. After we landed at Cloud Chief, I got bail for the five Indians and they did not have to go to jail. The Indians were my friends after what I had done for them.

I have done all kinds of hard work and at this time I am operating a cream station here in Cordell.