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INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM WOODSON HUBBARD

FIELD WORKER-----MARY JANE STOCKTON.

William Woodson Hubbard, who died about nine (9) years ago, was a real pioneer of Rogers county, builder of a home, conductor of a real pioneer "trading post" and founder of a town--Inola. The same might be applied to Alfred Foyil, founder of the town which bears his name and which is referred to at length in the "Story of Robert Kittrell", previously submitted. This article, material for which was obtained from reliable sources, has to deal with W. W. (Woodie) Hubbard, founder of the town of Inola.

It was back in 1892 when a young man walked along the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern (now Missouri Pacific) railroad track from Wagoner to "Inola Station"--then a mere whistling post on a broad prairie and at the foot of a prairie mountain which bears that name, Inola--pronounced "E-no-lah," (a Cherokee Indian word meaning Blackfox, a family name among the Cherokees.) The "town" at that time consisted of stock yards, a loading rack and two houses--a depot and section house. Mr. Hubbard, then a young man and ambitious to engage in the merchantile business on a small scale and in anew location, had been told about this place while "prospecting" at Wagoner--some twenty miles away, and, being short on money and there being no

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regular passenger service on the "Iron Mountain" made the trip on foot. The track at this place, in fact in all parts of the Creek Nation, was enclosed by a strong and high barbed wire fence on either side of the track. Here, just off the right-of-way and about 100 feet from the depot--to the southwest, he decided to establish a small store--his entire "capital" being but little more than a hundred dollars. Native lumber was secured from a saw mill in the Verdigris bottoms, a few miles away, and a small "store house" erected--Mr. Hubbard doing most of the carpentry work himself; and a small stock of groceries procured from Fort Smith, Arkansas, where he had a small credit rating. Most of his customers were cattlemen--cowboys who had charge of the herds from Texas then being "grazed" in the large pasture leased by Clarence W. Turner from the Creek Nation.

A few weeks later his mother came to him from Alabama and they lived in the "back room" of the little store.

In due time a United States post office--called Inola, was established with Mr. Hubbard as postmaster. Things went along very well for a year or two and finally the "establishment" was

visited by robbers who appeared just about sundown, ordered Mr. Hubbard and the few people who happened to be present to "form a line and reach for the clouds"; while they proceeded to pillage the post office, pocket what money was found and appropriate generous supplies of tobacco and canned goods and gallop away toward the wooded bottoms of the Verdigris river. When the southbound Iron Mountain train---a "mixed train"--- several freight cars with a passenger coach in the rear approached, curious people stopped to enquire about the hold up the evening before, among them being Hamilton Fine, a business man from Van Buren, Arkansas, and his charming daughter, Millie. Mr. Hubbard was a passenger on that train (going to Fort Smith for a supply of goods) and naturally struck up an acquaintance with Mr. Fine and his daughter, especially the latter. This acquaintance developed into a courtship---a love affair and finally into a marriage.

It was in 1894 when Miss Fine, then "Mrs. Hubbard" came to frontier town to make her home; in a two-room house built by the "lucky man" as a nest for the bride. There they lived until his death, forty years later. There their three children, Edna, Mabel and Homer, were born; and there Mrs. Hubbard still

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lives. The Hubbards grew wealthy, their business increasing as the country was settled up and when the town was surveyed by the Dawes Commission, in 1902, they acquired a number of valuable business and residence lots, on one of which they erected a brick building, later occupied by the "Farmers' Bank"; still later as post office; and now by Frank Woolard's Drug Store. Mr. Hubbard accommodated many people in the days of crop failures and hard times and his passing was universally mourned. He was a consistent christian, and by fair, honest dealings became one of the best loved men in all the "Region 'round about." On one occasion a citizen of the Creek Nation after allotment was indebted to Mr. Hubbard about a hundred dollars for groceries which had been consumed by the citizen's family; he was unable to pay the bill (Mr. Hubbard did not crowd him for it) but when the citizen had serious sickness, possibly a death, in his family and was still out of "means" Mr. Hubbard extended further credit, amounting all told to nearly two hundred dollars, to secure payment of which the citizen and his wife executed a mortgage on ten acres of land located five miles away. Being unable to pay when the notes became due and desiring to "pull

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up stakes and leave the 'blooming ' country" they proposed to make a Warranty Deed to the ten acre tract in exchange for their note and mortgage. Mr. Hubbard had no use for the land, and it had but little apparent value, but there was nothing to do but accept. He kept the land a few years, offering at any time to deed it to any one who would refund "what he was out on it." But no one took him up, so he kept the land, later making an oil and gas lease on it to encourage development along that line. Lo, and behold: a gusher was brought in near by and later several paying wells were "brought in" on this ten-acre tract and Mr. Hubbard realized ten or fifteen thousand dollars in royalties. The wells have since been abandoned, the oil being exhausted, and the land now has but little, if any, cash value. Such is life in the oil fields.

Material for this article was obtained from C. W. Crighton, J. M. Robertson and Ezra Lawson, long time residents of Inola, also from Mrs. Lou Omstead, who has lived there since 1896 and from Will Harper, who taught the first school at Inola in 1897 now a practicing attorney in Claremore.