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Nation, Carrie
Lawton
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Field worker; Amelia F. Harris
March 26, 1937.

BIOGRAPHY OF Mr. N. C. Crain (White)
1112 North Hudson.
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

BORN Tennessee
April 12, 1937.

PARENTS.

N. C. Crain, Tenn. (Father)
Never came to Oklahoma.
Margaret Crain, Tenn. (Died) Mother.

I read so much of the free homesteading in Oklahoma that I decided I would try my luck and come to Oklahoma, in 1900. There were about fifteen long passenger coaches loaded with all classes and kinds of humanity, all seemingly happy and good natured; there were many laughable incidents and trouble too. I came out about three weeks too soon; and the time seemed so long and uncertain, I became discouraged and started back to Georgia. Then the time was set and I turned around and came back but too late for the run.

I returned home and came back for the drawing at Lawton, but was disappointed again as I drew a blank, but I decided to stay and buy some lots and made arrangements with Jim Wilkins of the First State Bank of Oklahoma City to cash my checks. I bid on the lots until they would reach \$350.00 and \$400.00, then I would quit. I thought they were selling too high. I could not see into the future. Everybody that bought doubled and tripled their money on these lots. One old man looked as if he did not have a dime kept bidding on the lots; finally he bought one for

\$400.00 (Uncle Sam demanded cash); so he sat down on the ground, took off his boot and in the bottom of his sock he had several \$100.00 bills. He peeled four \$100.00 bills off and paid right now. There was a First National Bank, in a tent, guarded by soldiers; it was safe I guess but the people were careful about money.

A stranger came up to me one day and said he would give \$50.00 to anybody that would help him at the bank get his checks cashed. He showed me his bank book, he was a Mason with plenty of good credentials, so I told him I thought he was all right and I would stand good at the bank for him. I introduced him to Jim Wilkins, President of State National. He let him have the money and the stranger paid me the 50.00, I did not lose any money; I rented a lot and put up a tent on it, right next to street and Draper. They had a tent undertaking parlor. One evening my neighbor's son (the neighbor lived just north of me) came running in my tent and asked me if I was the undertaker. I said, no they were in the next tent, and asked what was the matter. Well , Pa had resisted a robber and got killed. They wanted an undertaker; this was a common occurrence. There were robbings and killings every day.

The Government stationed a few officers there but they could not handle that mob, saloons, gambling of all kinds.

Indians, men and women and children, bet on the shell game. This was three grains of corn, a bullet was placed under one of them and then the betting started from \$1.00 to \$50.00, guessing where the bullet was. This was indeed a gamble. Amid all the confusion, tent town soon gave away to shanties or cottages, while better buildings were going up on Main street to take care of the banks, grocery, dry goods and hardware stores. We had to haul all of the lumber from Marlow. The roads were dirt. Churches and schools were built as well as the saloons. One of these saloons had a sign painted over the door that read, "All Nations welcome here except Carrie" !

Up the street from me a man had a good sized safe in his cafe. A new comer came to Lawton, and seeing this safe he asked the man if he would keep \$800.00 for him until morning. The man said, "Sure, it will be safe" - The next morning the man went back for the money. The Cafe man said, "Neighbor you had not been gone 20 minutes when robbers came in and at the point of the gun forced me to open the safe and took your money and mine too". No one believed his story but nothing could be done.

The first street in Lawton was named Goo-Goo. A. C. Scott had a drug store on the street. Carpenters made lots of money, they ran crews day and night. They used a gasoline torch light

at night to work by. I never saw so many snakes and tarantulas. I caught two big tarantulas almost too big for the one-half gallon fruit jar that I put them in. I gave them to the A. C. Scott Drug Store.

A cow boy told me he always cleaned off a spot and put his grass lariat in a circle around him and that nothing ever bothered him or crossed this rope.

One amusing incident was a young negro who would pick his banjo and sing every day. People would toss him money; he saved enough to buy some lots. He did not seem to have any clothes but the ones he had on. They got so dirty that folks laughed at him about it. One day he came to me and asked for pan of water and some soap. I gave it to him. He wet himself all over, then rubbed the soap on until he made a lather all over him. Then he scrubbed good, rinsed off the soap and went right on, with his clothes wet, to work.

I lived in Lawton for two years; then came to Oklahoma City and went into the Real Estate business. I remember when John Shartel and Mr. Classen started to lay the tracks for a street car, the citizens became so enraged they armed themselves, and went to where they were laying the tracks and ordered them to stop. John Shartel asked what did they mean, "Well we do not intend to have a railroad run through our town", John said, "We are not building a railroad. Just a street car line". "You can not

fool us, a street car would not pay here". John had to do some real talking before the citizens would let him continue work and lay his tracks.

Game was plentiful, the first year I came; many of the new settlers made a living by shipping and selling wild game. Was not long until the game became scarce and then a law was made prohibiting any shipping.