

CROMWELL, WILLIAM OLIVER.

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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project

CROMWELL, WILLIAM OLIVER INTERVIEW 1369

Field Worker's name Merrill A. Nelson,

This report made on (date) April 28 1937

1. Name William Oliver Cromwell,
Lawyer, former Attorney General of Oklahoma Territory.
2. Post Office Address 215 North Independence, Enid, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) 424 West Maple
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 22 Year 1860
5. Place of birth Adams County, Illinois, in the country.

6. Name of Father Jesse Cromwell Place of birth Alexandria,
Virginia.
7. Name of Mother Anna Eliza McMurray Place of birth Jacksonville,
Illinois.

Other information about mother She was the greatest reader I

ever knew. Hated wrong more and loved right. Had 6 children.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached .

Merrill A. Nelson
Field Worker,
April 28, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. William Oliver Cromwell,
215 N. Independence, Enid, Oklahoma.

In a most interesting narrative, Mr. Cromwell gives a bit of his ancestry and it is from both father and mother's side an illustrious line. He also gives a most readable account of the happenings to his immediate forebears in their pioneering. He was one of a family of seven children, only one other than himself, a sister, Mary, now living in Oklahoma, at Edmond. Before coming to Oklahoma, Mr. Cromwell had led an active and interesting public life, the events of which are omitted in this manuscript as has also been the family history, because it does not relate to early Oklahoma.

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At one time in my early manhood, I filed on a tract of land two miles west of Kremlin. The original claimant on this tract owed the bank of Enid, so I filed for it. I sold it for \$500.00 to a Russian who improved it and sold it for \$18,000.00.

There were two other ways of filing. One way was the preemption, the right of a squatter to purchase ahead of others when land is sold; the other was by the timber method. You could claim twenty acres, then put timber on it and in so many years get a patent.

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It took me four weeks to go from a place twenty-four miles east of Lincoln to my ranch. I had two horses but one was spavined and the other was club-footed.

I started to Seattle, Washington, about 1893. I sent my baggage and one hundred volumes down to the depot, mostly textbooks, my grip and trunk.

I planned to go to old Oklahoma for the opening and especially to see some old acquaintances before going to Seattle. I walked to the station and bought a ticket to Enid. I remained here when I arrived. I landed at North Enid, November 16, 1893. The bus brought me to the Montezuma Hotel in Enid. I got a room, pulled off the pillow cases, covered the pillow and sheet with newspapers, and slept with my pants on. They were nice, clean people who were running it, but I took no chances.

The Rex was not yet in existence. We afterwards held court there in the building which became the Rex Hotel. This Rex Hotel was apparently of brick, being painted tin. They would send pictures of it to Congress and the Congressmen would think it too bad not to stop the trains at a town where there was a three story brick building.

I finally got me an office here in Enid, but that is another story.

One of the men I especially wanted to see as a reason for coming to Enid, was W. L. Condit. He was a member of the townsite board which had the supervision of the business and residence lots, especially in contested cases. The other members of this board were Charles O. Wood, of Texas, an old man from North Carolina, and Victor M. Wallace. This Mr. Wallace left here and went back to Washington, his former home. Now he is in New York City practicing law. They were located in the present Ed Weatherly building, south of the square. On the inside of the square 400 x 900 feet were the postoffice, the land office and a little office building.

The building (Ed Weatherly's) was a frame one, but this old building was taken down and a brick building has taken its place. (Where Safeway grocery store is now). We used to also have some boxing matches in this building. I used to work in the YMCA at Lincoln, Nebraska, and so knew something of boxing. A man who was training for the ring came at me like a mad bull in one of these sparring matches. He promised me he would not punish me so I landed him on his chin. This loosens the cartilage in the upper part of the

head, and he did not like the blow. He hit me a crack right under the shoulder which was painful. After two weeks another young lawyer whom I knew came here from Lincoln.

I also met O. J. Fleming, president of the Bank of Enid, probably the first bank opened here. I began to feel I had business friends here and so gave up my idea of going to Seattle.

For eight or ten years we did a large business practicing law. All the citizens, just like myself (though I had been in railroad business), wanted the trains to stop in Enid. Due to the fact that the Rock Island Officeholders were interested in North Enid, they did not stop the trains at what is now Enid, all traffic going through the more northern town. Senator Owens was one of those interested in North Enid. I fought the Rock Island on this point. At the same time, I assisted them by preventing disorder. I believe in protection of property, and person. The mob would tear up rails and did ditch a freight train, loaded with wheat. They ditched another near Pond Creek where the same trouble was on.

One evening at six, the bell which tolled every time there was a lull in business in the big square, began ringing. Sometimes we would meet in a big tent at about the northwest corner of the present courthouse. The mayor and

his brother were railroad contractors here. There was a wooden bridge crossing East Main, where the iron one is on the Rock Island now. The mob went down, piled bales of hay around the piers, saturated them with coal oil and set them afire. The mayor (Spencer) seemed to want the bridge to burn. But I said; "You must stop this. If you do not the passengers will sue every man on your vigilance committee and break the town. Go down below the city limits if you want to cause trouble", I shouted. They saw the point and left. Thus the tension was eased.

There were two officers at the land office, the Receiver and the Register. The Register loved to drive a couple of horses with a fine buggy.

There was another time when they were starting to tear up the tracks. I got the sheriff and others and went down there. Three ties had had their spikes removed already. I got them to desist. The train slowly went through without going off the track.

They put a group of one hundred policemen on the city payroll. With this they raised a fund to mellow Harry Thompson, a railroad official. The Rock Island said if a certain sum-\$2,500. or so was raised they would put in a depot.

The citizens agreed. All the taxpayers helped.

A grand jury investigated the ditching of the trains and the destruction of bridges. The company, however, knew that the bridges were in danger. They even went so far as to enjoin five hundred members from talking against the Rock Island. So, little came from the investigation.

A senator of North Dakota finally ordered the Rock Island to stop at Enid. This was endorsed by Hoke Smith, Secretary of the Interior. Jefferson was designated a railroad town for its county, and Enid for "O" or Garfield County.

At one of the meetings, the father of Marquis James, who had settled on school land two miles southeast of Enid, was in town. The old man was a friend of mine. "You have been talking too much", I warned. "You must be cautious." After that when he got to talking, he would say, "Well, if you must use force, be cautious about it. Don't encourage destruction of property", he went on, repeating my talk to him.

All the marshals carried six shooters and most of them had forty-fives, too. Dennis T. Flynn was special, and I was local council for the Frisco. Mr. Marshall, a king of Tammany politician, was a marshal. He believed in doing things by force. He came from Cripple Creek, Colorado. He did not like mining. He made collections. He usually got his money. He became a friend of mine. Another was J. N. Clark. Both of them were

southerners.

A man absconded. They were after him when they tried to collect \$500. from him. The marshal followed and overtook him. "I see you made the collection, did he resist?" I asked. "I did not give him time to resist," replied the marshal.

The settlers used to cut timber from school land. The United States Marshal, Harry Thompson, was a friend of the settlers. It was reported that the government would prosecute.

"Come to the Coney Island saloon at twelve," Thompson said, "there is going to be a killing. There have been two strange men in town more than a week. They are government officials to see about the timber stealing. I'll order drinks for them, then I'll serve them another round. Who is going to pay for these drinks? the bartender will demand. 'I did not order them', I'll say. Then I will arrest them for the disorder they will cause and kill them in the act of arresting them."

I went over to Judge McAtee Murray's office and told him of the marshal's plans. "He is headstrong", said the judge. "Those men are here on an entirely different matter". I took the marshal to the judge's office and talked him out of his plan.

Later, two men came in here to an East Broadway restaurant to eat. The marshal claimed that they tried to draw a shot on him. He shot the men in the jaw. He killed, altogether that I know of, three men that way and one ^{he shot} in the temple.

Patterson was after Eisenburg. It was about dusk. The marshal tried to stop him. Patterson would probably have killed Eisenburg for what he had put in his paper. Patterson shot the marshal through the chest. The marshal went back through the store, leaned his gun against something in the door and shot, while staggering. He came back through the store and died on the sidewalk from internal hemorrhage.

The editor left town, stayed away in North Enid until the feeling died down and then returned.

As I said, I remember Marquis James when a boy. He is the famous author. He had the whooping cough so severely one day that he caught hold of the buggy wheel to ease his pain. I tried to help him. His father said he had it so bad at times that he would whoop till he lay down. He and my son, J. Lee, were in high school together.

Marquis James' first experience in literature was on the Quill, the Enid High School paper. He hasn't been here since

his mother died. He visits with Lee Cromwell when he comes to town. He sends him a copy every time he writes a book. He was a home boy. He didn't hang around pool halls.

A mob was here on the square one day. The United States commissioner lived at North End. People thought he ought to make his residence here. He was a short fellow, with hair turning white. On the park in the center of town (an acre of ground) was the postoffice, a small building 16x18 feet in dimensions; the federal land office, and a small office. When the commissioner would not come here they asked him to resign. He refused and they threatened to hang him. At three the mob came after him. They tore the building which was his office to pieces and put a rope around his neck. I got hold of the ex-mayor, J. C. Moore, also Meibergen, Lee and McKenzie. I got a dry goods box from one of the stores, carried it across the street to where the mob was congregated. "Get up and talk to the mob, "I told the mayor." No, it would not do," he said in a pinched scotch voice. "You could not do a thing."

There was a big crowd a little ways off around the man they were trying to hang. I gathered about a dozen to hurrah around the box where I was standing. "You shall

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not do this thing, " I said, " I know the names of every one of you and if you kill this man, I will turn you all in to the authorities." After I harangued for about twenty minutes the mayor said with less fear than before, "Maybe you had better get me up on the box now." With the dozen men around me, part of them lawyers, we quieted the mob.)

Our law firm was Fields, McKenzie and Cromwell. It was just west of the post office and a little north. We had three twenty-five foot lots on the square.

I had been selected as Associate Justice by a party group. Governor Frantz wanted me to be Attorney General, and so I withdrew with an unwritten understanding that M. C. Garber was to have the Associate Justice position, if I were chosen Attorney General.

So I began to serve in 1906 and served two years. They paid me \$1800. salary; with warrants and expenses. The expenses amounted to more than the salary. As I was the last Attorney General under the Territorial government, I had to be legal advisor to help get the state of Oklahoma into the Union. I advised in the preparation of the statehood elections statement for a vote on the Constitution. I initiated the Woman Suffrage Bill. I was on the Returns board.

The Prohibition agitation helped Frantz. I am a prohibitionist in thought and habits but do not believe in forcing the issue. You can manage to put it over as people have to submit to the laws but the best way is to care for the children when young.

There was of course a good deal of routine connected with my state office. One of the special matters I dealt with, however, was the freight rate business. I caused the Rock Island to be rebuilt by issuing a mandamus.

Previously the Rock Island trains went as slowly as five miles per hour between here and El Reno in places, due to the poor road bed. I insisted on the present one hundred pound rails instead of the previous fifty-nine, and twenty-six ties to the rail instead of sixteen, seventeen or eighteen, which would not hold the trains. I had cuts filled, ballast improved and concrete culverts installed. Before the case reached court, the railroad got busy and completed the construction demanded. All I had as a guide was a case of a similar nature in New Jersey, applying to a railroad only six miles long.

Mr. Lowe, who appeared in a lower court for the first time, and a whole battery of lawyers complied with the order perfecting the case before it reached the Supreme Court.

Mr. Lowe was the General Attorney for the Rock Island.

In connection with this, a bridge gave way over the Cimarron, the result being that two coaches and the train sank in the quicksand. The tender was found recently.

Then I began to file cases before the Interstate Commerce Commission on rates of railroads. I reduced the rate to ^Kansas City to twelve and one half cents and the export rate from thirty-one to twenty-four cents. This reduction of seven and one half cents a hundred came off the traffic of \$35,000,000 a year, at which I estimated the total freight bill.

The railroads objected when I tried to make the Oklahoma 'common points' rate to Galveston equal or less than the rate from Kansas City to Galveston. They contended that their low rate was a water rate; i.e., that it was in competition with supposed steamships going down the Missouri, when as a matter of fact, freight was not moving by river at all. I saw no reason at least why Oklahoma City and ^Mcalester should not enjoy equal rates with Wichita and Topeka. Mr. Lowe examined the witnesses himself. I finally secured an equal rate from Oklahoma City to the Gulf as that from Kansas City to the Gulf.

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It made the rate on the Kansas City Southern twelve cents instead of eighteen cents a hundred on grain to seaport. I tried eighteen or nineteen cases of this type. All were won but two or three. I reduced the rate on coal from Colorado, Arkansas or Mississippi, into the state, also on horses, cattle, hogs, coming from Fort Worth, and Kansas. I reduced lumber from seven different origins, such as Arkansas, Louisiana and other points.

Back in the '90's I was a Populist for awhile but when the Democratic party adopted some of our planks under Bryan, we had no candidates. This was partly a farmer's movement. I, accordingly, was the only member from Oklahoma at the National Democratic Committee for 1896.

As our populist party disbanded in 1896, I went back to the Republican party. I made a campaign against Callahan after Mr. Flynn had failed to beat him. In the county, Garfield, which I represented, Jesse Dunn was my opponent. They voted at the state meeting for several hours; Callahan and I both lacked ten of getting the majority, there being some other candidates. I had a friend who was continually getting drunk. Finally Woods County, which was dry, when it saw this,

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gave its twenty votes to Callahan and he won. That was in 1896.

I led the campaign for Bird against Bill Cross, Democrat, for Secretary of State. After statehood Bill Cross became Secretary of State. They voted all night. After sunup, Bill Cross got the nomination. That was in 1907. Later McGuire, Republican, ran against Bill Cross. Jake Hammon, who built a monument on Bill Cross' grave, was a friend of mine.

To go on with my work as Attorney General. I indicted the Rock Island and the Frisco because they discriminated. Their rate from Chicago to Woodward was different from the rate between Chicago and Enid.

Many Republicans favored bringing Indian Territory in as a separate state, though this might mean two more Democratic senators. During the negotiations for statehood, a committee waited on me and declared that if Indian Territory were permitted to hold their own election, they would bring an almost unanimous vote for the Republican party. A man on the Dawes Commission was the spokesman.

I pointed out that the Enabling Act insisted that the election be held under the laws of Oklahoma Territory,

as it was both in Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory. In counting the vote, I was designated a member of the Returns Board, five state officers composing the board. Mr. Baxter, state treasurer, only served one day. The Governor, Secretary of State, and Auditor were the other members, but none served hardly at all. The Governor, being a candidate, eliminated himself. Secretary of State was afraid of Bill Murray and his squirrel rifle brigade. Murray seemed to think some one was going to do something with the returns--miscount them, but the election was a square deal. Murray threatened anyone who would dare open the boxes but I made the count. The Secretary of State left the state and did not return for a while, possibly to avoid Murray's threats. It took me three weeks to count the returns.

Governor Haskell's private attorney, Tom Smith, was one of the watchers. I was casually acquainted with the Governor. There was also a watcher for the senators and a watcher for the representatives. There was also a watcher for the counties, these last three having one for each party, and a general one, making eight in all. Mr. Baxter came in at the opening, but soon left. Tom

Smith and I and the Secretary of State were the only ones that started. I put Tom Smith to work. Amos Fulsom, Secretary of State, left before counting commenced. Baxter did not come back so I was the only official then in charge. Tom Smith quit at the end of four days, saying he would be back, but he never showed up so I finished up myself. I would give the newspaper boys reports as to how the counties were going.

The vote went about as I expected. The vote ran approximately twenty-five thousand, total on the state election. Governor Murray never came up. The Secretary did not come back till the votes were counted. He was voted out and Bill Cross became Secretary of State.

The Republicans wanted two states, though it seems hard to believe. Many Democrats wanted one state. Congress settled it anyway and would not let us have two if we had wanted them.

In this respect we differ from Texas, which has the right to cut itself up into more states if it so desires. I argued for two states. I said either of our states is much larger than Rhode Island, where when the train enters

the state you have to start spitting or it will leave before you hit the state. They were arguing single statehood for North and South Dakota and double for us. North and South Dakota have only one crop they said. The northern part is very cold some said. One of the Congressmen declared that the crop is three months late in the fall and you have nine months winter.

Quite a few Democrats wanted single statehood-- believe it or not. MacMasters' Magazine of Oklahoma City and Shawnee openly advocated it. They had a picture of a blanket and a lot of tepees around it with the caption--"This blanket shall not be divided." Of course the Democratic politicians wanted two states.

Steele was appointed Governor by Harrison in 1888. Governor Seay, second governor, was a character. I became quite well acquainted with him. He was really a wonderful man, a bachelor. He had a high pitched voice and no beard.

One time Governor Seay was circuit judge, corresponding to the present District Judge, and seven or eight lawyers had been arrested for playing poker.

"It is a shame to disturb a little friendly game," said the arrested Judge. "I tell you how we will fix it. I will elect Seay judge pro-tem." He did so. Seay freed the judge and soaked the other lawyers \$50 apiece.

(Another time, the judge sentenced a gambler. "I fine the man \$25.00," said Seay. "I got that in my hip pocket", said the man. "I also sentence you to thirty days in jail, have you got that in your hip pocket?" shouted Seay.)

Cornelius and Judge Seay were partners. They got one hundred dollar school warrants at sixty cents on the dollar. They came to my house to figure how to collect. We had Seay get a judgment on the county and then Cornelius easily collected the warrants.

Other men of the time I know were Secretary of State Filson (Charles), who served with me (His son is clerk of the Federal Court under Judge Vaught); Baxter, who was treasurer; the head of the school land commission; the auditor; and Amos Ewing, the State Oil Inspector.

I overruled Amos Ewing one time. He said that the farmers would have to use kerosene of a certain grade for their incubators. I said, "The state has no business to specify the grade if it is safe". They used to say if you smelled kerosene, Ewing was around.

John Moore was about the first mayor Enid had.

Tams Bixby, now deceased, who districted the State for Constitutional Delegates, edited the Muskogee Phoenix. They had one district which was unusual. Bill Murray had a book he called his Bible with a picture in it of this district. It was a case of gerrymandering. They had made his district forty miles long and only a few miles wide to keep Murray from being elected. He won in spite of the handicap.

There was a man of a certain firm who said, "If Bryan is elected, the country will go to the dogs." "We are fixed all right", said another man. "My partner is a Democrat and I am a Republican. We can sell meat at a good price no matter who is elected."

My fellow officers were capable men and handled their business well. However, in those days there was not so much to do. So perhaps it was all right that the governor received half as much as the Attorney General does now.

I do not believe in a mortgage on homesteads; also, they should be given five years to redeem if incumbered. We now have six each of both State Normals and Agricultural Colleges. I wanted about half the State Normals discontinued and I would do the same with the latter. This would reduce

the troublesome legislative school bloc. Governor Murray said, "I agree with you on this program."

The civil service can become an evil. They are starting civil service for the police. In thirty years they will have over one hundred police where they now have only a few, which will greatly increase the burden of the taxpayers.

In the statehood election campaign, I worked for the Republican party. There was a joint meeting of Republicans and Democrats at Lawton. Haskell and Gore were there to represent the Democrats. Owens was billed but as Gore lived at Lawton, the array of combatants seemed to one-sided and he would not go. They put me up. The first five minutes they began to disturb the gathering. I waited patiently. Finally the chairman, Gore, said, "Gentlemen, I am ashamed of you. We have brought this Republican down in our territory. We have put him up first. He is the Attorney General. Now if you do not quiet down, nobody is to speak here." I spoke one hour and twenty minutes without further interruption and had a good time. T. P. Gore was an able man. Governor Haskell made a good address on statehood.

Haskell was indicted by the Federal Government for being implicated in Indian land deals. Some prominent Republicans and Roosevelt took part in the investigations.

J. I. Crowsell, a distant relative, was a clerk in the Dawes Commission. There was a Superintendent of Indian Schools, and a man back in St. Louis on the Federal Townsite board, his enemies, who knew all about the transactions.

Prior to this he had been in office and challenged Dennis Flynn to a debate. Flynn did not appear to defend the Republicans. Haskell crowed and claimed he would meet any Republican at Toad, Perry or Shawnee. The Republicans accepted in a public letter. They put me up. I knew something of the deals. There were thirty-three cases against the governor. I brought eleven tapes, representing law suits on the stage. The audience found out there was something out of the ordinary and were there. Haskell did not show up. I spoke two hours and forty-five minutes. I went over to Perry. J. Boles was holding court. Governor Haskell did not come but had two stenographers take down what I said. He was liable to impeachment.

The case about these Indian lands was at Ardmore. In politics I had to fight the governor but when the case came up I was on his side. Henry Asp, Government Attorney from Santa Fe, a writer and publisher of verse and a member of the Constitutional Convention, tried the case; a demurrer was sustained.

Tom Smith, Haskell's private attorney, called me at Muskogee at the Katy Hotel one Sunday afternoon. I talked with him about the case. "I am for the governor," I said. "He has committed no offense against the United States." They offered me a contract. "I want no contract. I am only a good neighbor in this case. There are three men who will control the case." He asked me and I gave the names of these mentioned above. They brought an old judge from Salt Lake City to try the case.

The judge was crippled. I further told them I did not think they would put Haskell on trial. The case blew over.

Governor Ferguson was a newspaper man at Watonga. His son edits the Cherokee Republican at Cherokee. I did not have much business with him. He was very severe.

His wife was bright, a newspaper woman.

Governor Frantz, a Rough Rider, followed him.

Frantz was previously an Osage Indian Agent, but accepted when asked by Roosevelt.

Third Governor, Bob Williams, was one of my favorite governors.

I had a case of a man arrested for having in his possession a quart of whiskey and a still. He couldn't make his bond. Someone said: "Cromwell might make it." I could not get a certificate of deposit. "I'll sign the bond judge", I said, as he was a friend.

While waiting to make bond, Judge Williams saw me and talked till ten o'clock. "Hadh't you better go in there, they are waiting," I asked. "Well they can't start without me," he replied.

The Republicans were in a pitiful minority at the Constitutional Convention. Murray was President.

I advocated a system of tax titles, known as the Australian system. Every time you file a deed a public officer certifies it is O. K. This did not pass. I asked Murray why he did not put it in. He said they

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took advantage of him though he thought it was good. I appointed an abstracter to go over that part of the constitution and I could not stop it when it came to the floor but I could have saved a lot of abstract fees.

I wrote two communications about American Naval Vessels and American Merchant Marines and how they might be guarded from Submarine attacks. These were addressed to Thomas A. Edison, who was then official technician of the government, in care of the Secretary of the Navy. I made three propositions.

One was that the ships should have steel chains set away about thirty-five or forty feet from the sides of the ship. Another was to fire traps or nets like a clay pigeon is fired to catch these torpedoes before they strike the ship. My third was build long pointed fast moving ships which would ram these submarines.

The idea of the chains was to explode the torpedo before it hit the ship. The ship would rock but would not be damaged.

After Mr. Edison's death, newspaper men accredited him with the steel netting plan now in use on all ships. However, this was my proposition. Now they have these nets which go to the very bottom of the keel. This was nothing more than my proposition to have something a distance away from the ship to explode the torpedo.

After the report of the Lusitania tragedy I did not send my letter to Edison for ten days. In the meantime I asked Mr. Zacharias, the well known former banker, and he approved it. Then I sent it on and when the newspaper men looked through Edison's papers they saw drawings of this invention of mine which has doubtless saved many American lives.

During the World War, about September 1918, Senator Otjen and I attempted to enlist. I had already bought \$12,000 worth of liberty bonds but I wanted to aid the United States.

In addition to buying the bonds which I had to sell for considerably below par (eighty-nine cents on the hundred--they later went to 101), although the local authorities did not welcome me to speak as I was

too militant, I made speeches of two and one half hours in Eastern Nebraska and also at Hennessey, Oklahoma. Here I found many Germans.

One time I was in the kitchen of a German home. The man said, "Der Kaiser is wonderful. Wilson ain't anything." I hit him in his own kitchen. "If you don't like it, why did you come to this country?", I asked. "You have freedom of speech, of action. Your personal property rights are respected. We're all for Wilson. He was too slow, if anything, in starting the war. There are 122,000,000 people in the United States. The men do the voting. Each one has one share. President Wilson has only one vote at the polls. You have just as many as he does." "Nobody ever told me dot before," declared the German.

My brother took me around among these Germans, where previously I had taught school. The old man would sit and cry. We had big meetings which made better Americans out of many of them.

As I said, Otjen and I tried to enlist. I was ten years too old and could not make the entrance to an Officers' Training School in California, for which I was applying. I also had a bodily ailment (hernia) which

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might have prevented my enlistment even if I hadn't been too old. Perhaps I could have made it if the war hadn't closed in November.

After statehood (I was Attorney General from 1906 - 1908) I became editor of the Enid Morning News for about six months. I would work on this job from two o'clock until eight-thirty every day. A man from Kentucky took over the paper the first of August. He was used to writing the editorials so had no need for my services. The Morning News was started about 1906 by a man who had been a Police Court Reporter without editorial experience. He induced me to take that part of his paper.

In 1932 I was chosen on Governor Murray's unofficial Budget Committee* and served from July 1932, to January, 1933. I started an agitation for homestead exemption - no liens allowed, with a law prohibiting mortgaging. This was the first time such a law had been made public before the state. I also favored striking penalties for delinquent taxes. I also stood for the limitation of ad Valorem taxes. The board was composed of two lawyers and two business men, one of each of whom was a Republican and the other a Democrat. A Rancher, an Oklahoma Natural Gas Corporation man, and an Associate Justice formed the committee. One of the men owned bank stock and disapproved of my idea of striking penalties. He had paid

his taxes, he said, and thought no one else should be forgiven.

Our first session was in the Government Mansion. We held sessions once or twice a week. We appeared before the judicial committee. I wanted a moratorium of mortgages. This was wholly constitutional. It does not break a contract but gives to trial judge power to vary terms of contract by enjoining upon clerk delay. I believe in limiting assessed valuation to \$2,500 or more. This would free all homes up to \$5,000 or \$6,000.

My reasons for exemption are that a homestead is a home for a family and a man should be protected in his domicile. Money invested in a family returns no dividends. You can tax a family out of a home. Here we do not allow men to suffer poverty to death. The government feeds, clothes, and furnishes shelter for the needy.

I have a son and daughter. My son, Jesse Lee Cromwell, is named after father (first name) and grandfather (surname). He is president of the local Lion's Club and part owner of the Cromwell Press. Mary Cromwell is an Oklahoma State University graduate. She also attended Phillips. She took music

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under Professor Dyksterhaus. She graduated in May, 1924, from the University.

I have written a number of articles, one of which is called the Kingdom Invisible. In this account of heaven, others have found satisfaction, for one lady, a prominent stenographer, who was losing her mind, has found strength to carry on by its perusal.

If I have spoken plainly it is because I believe a biography should state what a man thinks, what his convictions are, what he advocates and what he has accomplished.

Note: The Budget Committee consisted of Judge W. O. Cromwell of Enid, Oklahoma; Major E. M. Kerr, Muskogee, Oklahoma; Mr. Ben F. Harrison, State Budget Officer; Mr. C. R. Strong, Clinton, Oklahoma; Judge C. C. Hatchett, Durant, Oklahoma.-Field Worker.