

INDEX CARDS:

Opening-Cherokee Strip
Alva
Woods County
Alva Normal

Field Worker, Herbert Rogers,
July 14, 1937.

Interview with George Crowell,
Alva, Oklahoma.

Born February 2, 1861,
Stanley County, North Carolina.

Parents James Crowell, N. Carolina
Kathryn Russell, N. Carolina.

George Crowell was born in Stanley County, North Carolina, in 1861. His great-grandfather Crowell fought in the Revolutionary War. His father fought in the Civil War.

Mr. Crowell was living in Kansas at the time of the run in Oklahoma. He made the run on an old horse, which after starting lost his wind, and stopped for a long time. After getting his wind he made good time. Mr. Crowell arrived forty minutes after the first man got here. The first man on the site was H. C. McGrath (that is in Woods Co.) Mr. Crowell settled where the Rialto Theatre and Rialto Cafe are now located on the north side of the square. He is the only one who filed on the square and still owns the land and the improvements.

Mr. Crowell states that the first soldiers' dedicatory was filed here at 12:40 by A. C. Jobs for his brother.

Mr. Crowell was the first appointed county commissioner. He was appointed by the governor. The other men that were appointed commissioners elected Mr. Crowell as chairman. This was a job because the county was just getting started and money was scarce. Mr. Crowell says he got his first gray hair taking care of this office.

The commissioners formed only ten townships over the county then so as to economize on expenses. Expenditures for a full eighteen months were \$38,000. Now we have over thirty-five townships and spend several times that much money. Bills were cut just as low as they could be cut. Bills would be sent in from certain people for something they had done that the county hadn't told them to do. One lawyer had a bill for twenty dollars and they gave him five dollars and told him that was all they could give him. Warrants were worth only fifty cents on the dollar and this made the things the county commissioners bought for the aid of the people cost twice as much. There were \$20,000 worth of books sent to each county and it was thought that

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our county would buy these, but they couldn't afford it, so they didn't buy them.

When the county elected and appointed their other officers there had to be offices for these people and the offices were scattered all over the town. It was sometime before the court house was built. Mr. Crowell had his office in the back of the First National bank building. He was only paid \$180 for a year's work.

Soon as the county got rather settled the leaders began to talk about putting a Normal up here on the hill in Alva. Mr. Crowell says to give credit to H. L. Ross for coming to his office and suggesting the idea to him and several other men of the town. Men who were loyal helpers are: Sam Johnson, J. B. Share, Dr. W. D. Murphy, H. E. Noble, J. A. Stine, J. W. Monfort, and Mr. Hatfield. Mr. Hatfield, Monfort, and Crowell are the only ones left living and all live in Alva.

The Santa Fe Railroad Company was eager to see a Normal built here, and they issued passes to Mr. Crowell and his helpers to travel on, if used for this business. After a time the Normal was built.

Mr. Crowell has carried on a successful business and is a well known pioneer of Woods County.