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Field Worker: Harry M. Dreyer
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Biography of Mr. K. W. Dawson
600 Northeast 14th Street
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Born Clarksville, Missouri
August 8, 1862

I, K. W. Dawson, was born in Clarksville, Missouri on August 8, 1862. My parents were from Sanburtonbridge, New Hampshire, they were in the woolen manufacturing business, Spinners and Dyers. I also, learned this trade, but did not care anything about it. My parents are of English stock from back in England, who were also in woolen manufacturing business. I, like many when youngsters, did not follow my ancestors' occupation, as I did not like it. I always like to farm and had an ambition to own a good farm in Missouri.

When I was a kid and single, I put what money I had in to my pocket and went to Siloam Springs, Arkansas to buy some land. I looked at 40 acres there that taxes was \$1.25 an acre then, and that was too high. I went back home in Missouri and kept my hand on my pocket cook until I got there. Like many today who are afraid to get away from home. And like many who did likewise in early days, in Oklahoma, sold their small possessions to secure enough money to go back to Mother and Dad.

I remained in Missouri until I finished school. Graduated from Liberty school, I have no degree from college. I then taught school in Iowa and also in northeast Missouri.

I entered the produce business in Missouri, where I received my first experience at a business career.

We read in papers that Oklahoma was going to open for settlement, so I and some people around Clarksville said "let us go to Oklahoma." So we got some maps of Oklahoma which showed railroads and Oklahoma City and Purcell, Oklahoma. We thought we were pretty smart, and decided to ship our baggage and supplies and a small house that we built to Purcell, a few days before the opening, in 1889, thinking it would be near Oklahoma City, our destination. But when we arrived in Oklahoma City and Purcell, we discovered that our baggage was at a larger station down in Texas. They did not have accommodations to handle it at Purcell, so shipped on into Texas to be returned later. So here we were in Oklahoma with our house, baggage and supplies in Texas. We discovered that many others received same disappointment as we did. Some discovering that their baggage was in Kansas, and other states convenient to nearest stations, that could store property until after the Opening. We thought only people from north were coming into Oklahoma. It did not dawn on us that there would be thousands of people coming up from Texas to make the run.

I did not take a claim my self. I opened up a produce business in Oklahoma City and have been here ever since. I went over to Tecumseh to take up town lots, when the city of Tecumseh was opened. As it did not open same time as the country was open for settlement.

As I stood on the line fifteen minutes till time to make run to stake a lot, one fellow tried to slip in before the shot was fired to go. An Army officer had discovered him, and started after him to put him back in line. One of the Army guards fired a shot in the air to stop the sooner, and the entire crowd made a dash forward except me. I stood on the line having lots of fun watching others, thinking that the Army would drive them back, but they did not.

I guess they thought perhaps it would be no use to try for land. So there I stood on the line looking at my watch yet fifteen minutes before signal to go, which signal never came, and the result was, I received no property.

After opening business in Oklahoma City it was always carried under a firm name, I always owning all or part of it, which was operated part time under a partnership and part time under corporation and I later owning all of firm. We followed the various openings of towns and territory in Oklahoma with some of our products, usually hay and cider as business would be good there. We found that it was necessary to do so in order to do any business. When ever there was an opening anywhere nearly all the people would leave Oklahoma City to make the run, so there was not any use of staying. In this way we managed to branch out over the state and secure a large volume of business. Then came our various periods of depression in the City. I can see the people get, coming to my place of business, selling the few chickens they had, and saying they were leaving and going back home. Wanted to get enough money to go on. Usually taking any price, with but one thing in mind, that is enough money to leave the country.

When I first came to Oklahoma, I came in on a train, while others came with teams and wagons and saddle horses.

So far as Indians are concerned, there is not much I could say about them, as I stuck pretty close to my business in those days. With but one exception-I remember a fellow come running into my store and shouted the Indians were congregating around El Reno, and were preparing to attack Oklahoma City. So we all closed our doors and went out to the

west edge of the City to meet them as they arrived, talking about what we would do when they got here, but the Indians never arrived.

We had many hard times here in the early days. I remember when we were expecting our second child, I said to a Doctor, that was here, who later became very prominent, that I would need him soon to take care of my wife, when she would be confined but that I had no money. He would have to take his pay in bananas and oranges, as he used to call on various occasions and buy a few oranges and bananas. So the Doctor said that would be all right, that I should call him whenever I needed his assistance, which I did and my entire bill was only \$5.00. This is an example of how we got along in those days, while now it costs me five dollars for a prescription for a little medicine.

But I made everything that I have in Oklahoma, including my home, which will now have to be disturbed by noisy oil wells around me.

In addition to this I have had a little time to do some literary work, which I will show you. These poems I have written them in the past three years, whenever I am all alone and a thought comes to my mind, I sit down and write these lines. I have never had training to write poetry. I just began to write. I don't think training would help any along this line. As those who teach literary work seldom know how to do any thing literary.

I have been reading articles in the paper about your work, many have attempted to write histories who know little about it. I have read a good many articles in the paper in past years telling of early days in Oklahoma, which were not accurate, as to those times.

It is nice to have history of early pioneers, as there is not very many of them left, as they are rapidly passing away.