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Mulhall
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Claim Contest
Registration

Hibbs, interviewer
May 20, 1937

Interview with
Miss Ellen Donahoe
1302 South Guthrie Street
Tulsa, Oklahoma.

I was born on a farm near Columbus, Wisconsin, in 1855, and came to Oklahoma Territory in 1893 to make the run. I came to Mulhall, where my two brothers, Edward and John, were already located. There were six of us who made the run, five brothers and myself. My brothers were Edward, John, Dan and Will and we all staked claims within six miles of each other. Edward and John had made the run of 1889.

We started on our run from what is now the town of Marshall. After we got started on the run we were going along and after a little while I saw a hill and I told my brother Edward that I wanted to stake my claim on that hill and he asked me if I was sure that that was the place I wanted. I said "yes." My reason for that was in Wisconsin the lowland always overflowed and ruined the crops so I thought if I got on a hill in this new country I would not be bothered with anything like that, but of course in due time I saw my mistake and could see where

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I should have staked on the lower ground, although I ^{made} have/good money out of my claim. I still own the claim that I filed on and it has paid me over three thousand dollars in oil leases, and so far they have not drilled any wells.

My brother James who was the youngest of the family filed on his claim in the run of 1893 and some man contested his rights and he fought it and carried it to the Supreme Court and won. Then he had to leave right away on a business trip and had to be gone over six months and of course this gave the other man the opportunity he was looking for, so he moved in and claimed the land as the law said you could not be gone from it over six months at one time.

My two older brothers were in the farm marketing business at Mulhall before the run of 1893; they came to Oklahoma and made the run of 1889 and then settled at Mulhall; later they opened a bank there.

I stayed here three weeks to prove my claim and then went back to Wisconsin to my teaching. I had been a school teacher before coming to Oklahoma Territory. I would stay in Wisconsin and teach for three months

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and then I would come back to my claim and then I would go back to Wisconsin. It took me about eighteen months to pay for my claim, and then I quit coming back here. I finally came back to Oklahoma Territory in 1898, later on in 1905 I went back to Wisconsin and sold all our holdings there.

My father and mother left Wisconsin and came to Ponca City in 1898 and my father died about one year later in 1899. My mother died in 1908 and both are buried at Ponca City. My father was not active after coming here, but he had followed farming before.

My two oldest brothers, Edward and John, organized the Ponca City Milling Company in 1894 and it is still owned and managed by the Donahoe family, as my brother Edward is dead.

The Mulhall State Bank also is still owned by the Donahoe family.

My patent for my claim was signed by President Grover Cleveland, and I still have that patent.

After we staked our claims we left that evening for Enid to register and we arrived there the next morning thinking we would be there before any one else

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but when we got there we found two lines in front of the land office at least two miles long. I stood in line from Sunday morning until Thursday, when the Government men came along the line and took out the women and let them register at another place. My brother Edward would go along the line and buy all the negro claims that he could. That was permitted but you could not buy a white person's claim. In buying these negro claims it helped me to move up the line faster than I would have otherwise.

The conditions in this strip we filed on were terrible as naturally there were no improvements. It was just a burned over strip of wild land sixty miles wide and three hundred miles long, the water was not fit to drink. There were two nice young men from Illinois who staked a claim next to mine and they drank some of the water there and took typhoid fever and died within three weeks.

I now own four farms in Oklahoma and my home here in Tulsa.