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An Interview with an "Old Timer", S. L. Dunham,
1608 W. 18th., Tulsa, Oklahoma, White Man.

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By - W. T. Holland, Field Worker.

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I was born March 19, 1871, in Tipton County, Indiana.

My father, Jacob M. Dunham, was born in West Virginia in 1825.

My mother, Louise Stroup, was a native of Ohio.

I have heard my father tell of the "Falling of the Stars" in 1835, when he was a boy of ten. He said that he happened to be out and saw it. He, of course, was very much excited and frightened too, and running to the house to tell his parents found them calm and serene. His parents said the event had been foretold in the Bible, so, while they didn't know when it would happen, still, they weren't excited when it came.

My maternal grandmother was a Clements, a first cousin of Samuel Clements, (Mark Twain).

My parents moved west into Kansas in 1879, in Abbot County. Here he farmed for about four years; then he sold out his farm and bought a drug store at Altament, Kansas, which he and his brother, who was a pharmacist, operated until 1889, at which time my father made a trip into the Indian Nation preparatory to making the "run".

He came in a day or two after the run of 1889 and passed through Tulsa, and Keystone, but wound up at Oklahoma City. He scouted around in this part of the country, around Oklahoma City.

for several weeks locating or trying to locate a farm. One day he met a man who said he had a 160 he would sell, so they agreed on a price, which was small, and my father gave him all the money he had, \$2.50, as a down payment on the 160 acres, which he later found to be school land and not belonging to this man at all.

While out on one of these trips, he saw a bunch of deer at a salt lick, he stopped to watch them, as he didn't have a gun; and while watching, he noticed one of the deer jumping off a ledge of rock, and lighting stiff-legged at the base of the rock. He repeated this several times, and after the deer left, my father went down to investigate, and found a huge snake, dead. This deer had been jumping on this snake. This occurred out on Deep Fork Creek. He also saw some mountain lions on this trip of the large variety. The male and female looked pretty much alike, though different from regular lions whose male had a mane. He said these lions would chase a man, on foot or on horseback, if he ran from them, but if he turned and went toward them, they always retreated.

My eldest brother came in with my father on his first trip. That spring there were frequent rains and hard ones, and some of the streams were too full to ford. At Caney on the Verdigris, they had to build a raft out of logs of sufficient size to carry the team and wagon over the water. This they did.

But at Tulsa, which was only a village, they forded the Arkansas, although there was a ferry there too. They charged a fee of \$1.00 to ferry a team across so they forded the stream.

My father decided to locate in Oklahoma City, or near there, this was just after he had bought the farm and paid out his last \$2.50. As he was then up near Edmond he went to the railroad station and explained his condition and situation to the ticket agent, telling him he wanted to go to Altamont, Kansas to get his family and bring them back with him, but that he had no funds and if he would let him have a ticket he would mail the money back as soon as he reached Kansas. Well Sir! That agent believed my father and, without a word, gave him a ticket. Of course, the first thing my father did upon arrival at Altamont was to mail the money back to the ticket agent at Edmond.

They loaded up two covered wagons with some furniture, bedsteads, and some chairs, a cast iron cook stove, some pots and pans, some provisions, bedding and what clothing we had. One piece of furniture we brought, and I still have was an old hand made "safe" as they were called "Kitchen safe". It is now at least 125 years old, but is in perfect condition.

Along about that time, all our clothes were hand made,

and some of the cloth was woven by my grandmother. Many the time I have watched her weave cloth. There were eight children of us, and my wife came from a family of fifteen children. I, myself, am the father of thirteen children, (four boys and nine girls), ten of whom are still living. In the early days, it was a task to feed and clothe such a large family, especially where a lot of the cloth had to be woven at home. All we children were rocked in the same home cradle. Up until recently, that cradle was in use, but now I do not know its whereabouts.

On reaching Oklahoma City, my father traded for a lot (25 X 140) on the corner of Main and Hudson streets. He gave the man a one-eyed horse and an old buggy for it, and a few months later traded the lot for a farm of 160 acres. After about four years father sold the farm for \$1,000. This land wasn't of much farming value.

My father and oldest brother operated the first restaurant in Oklahoma City which was called the "Star" restaurant. It was located on Main street back of the Citizens Bank.

At first we had only a hole in the wall, a narrow place, but we did a land office business, coffee at 10¢ per cup and everything else in proportion. I've seen them standing in line for a half block waiting their turn to get a bite to eat. That was July, 1889 and as a lot of people were in and few

places to eat business was good.

Mosquitoes were there in swarms simply eating one up. The land was low, flat and poorly drained and during the years 1890 and 1891 there was an awful lot of Malaria, and so severe was this epidemic, that people died by the dozens. I know I came very near passing out. I remember we had to pay \$50.00 per month for the narrow shack we had. I've seen the back water up to the top of the ^{of the stores} counters in Oklahoma City, before the City was drained and sewers installed.

Oklahoma City was a tough place, of course, like all other western boom towns of that era. However, I didn't mix with this type as my father was a church man and didn't indulge in the vices and didn't allow us to indulge either. Killings were frequent there. Almost every night a killing would be reported.

My chief source of amusement was the dance. I didn't attend many of those in town, but out in the homes of the settlers, we had dances. I knew all the dances and the "calls" so I was employed to "call" for them. At the big dances I got \$5.00 per night, and at the smaller ones I only charged \$2.50. I was strong and my voice was about the strongest faculty I had. A neighbor told me he heard me calling one night, and he lived four miles away. The night

was quiet and the wind was favorable, I suppose which accounted for my voice carrying that far. Usually very good behavior was had at all the dances. The people wanted to meet and get acquainted and make new friends and this was one reason for these dances.

I think the first Protestant church built in Oklahoma City was a Methodist church. One of the first, if not the first, preachers, was Reverend Murray, a Methodist preacher.

I was in Oklahoma City at the time Carrie Nation visited the town. She had a way of smashing up saloon that was pretty effective, at least for a time. She went into Big John's saloon one night. John was upstairs, but his clerk soon got him the news, so he went down, gathered Mrs. Nation up in his arms, and quietly carried her out into the street and set her down. He told her that when she wanted to come into his place and purchase his wares, "O.K.", but that she must act like a lady in his house, as he was running a clean and legal business and would not tolerate any unlady-like actions on her part. Of all things!

The Delmore lake, near Oklahoma City is on a farm formerly owned by my father.

We used to have great fishing trips out on Deep Fork. We used a seine and have caught as high as a wagon bed full of fish at one time. We would use all we wanted then give the rest away, to the people at Wellston, a place near where we fished.

I farmed in Lincoln County after I was married, living there for several years. From even the early days in Lincoln County we had good rural schools, where preaching services were held before the churches were built.

In 1918 I came to Tulsa.
