

DUNCAN, CHARLES SCOTT.

INTERVIEW

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174

An Interview with Charles Scott Duncan, Tulsa.

By - W. T. Holland, Investigator.

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Corner Lawton and West 25th Streets.

One of the first things to impress me forcibly, was when our family left Kentucky in 1874 for our new home "Out West". We boarded a steamboat at Fort Burnside, Kentucky, on the upper Cumberland River. My mother had a brother in Texas, who had come West two years prior to this time, and had settled on public land. He had written to my parents about the land, and everything in general, until my father decided to come west himself. They packed some household goods and we set sail in February, 1874. We went down the Cumberland, past Nashville, Tennessee, on down to Smithland, Kentucky, where the Cumberland empties into the Ohio; here we changed boats and on this second boat we went down the Ohio to the Mississippi River at Cairo, thence down the Mississippi to the mouth of the Red River, thence up the Red River, on still another boat, to Jefferson Landing, Texas. The river towns were scarce and far between, however, the boat made many "landings" to discharge freight and passengers. While small, I remember many things about this trip. We were on the trip thirty days.

My father settled in Collin County, Texas, on land which he purchased from the state. This land, school land, was sold to the settlers at \$3.50 per acre, with interest at 3% and forty years to pay. My father died in 1926 on this farm where he had lived since he bought it in 1880.

I attended public school and when I was seventeen spent one year in Pilot Point High School in Denton County. Immediately after this I joined the Texas Rangers and served six years with them. I traversed the state from one extreme to the other, but mostly was established on the Southern or Mexican border. I could write a book on this experience. One of my first trips into the Territory was in the Fall of 1888 when I, with others, drove three hundred and fifty head of hogs over into the Mud Creek section. There were groves of Pecan trees over there and the ground was covered with pecans. The hogs, however, didn't do so well as the pecans were wormy, and over half of our herd died or disappeared. We had an Indian employed to look after them, and he, I think, was a little careless. We ferried the Red River at Scanlin's Ferry near Leon and it took a good while to get the hogs over. We, several of us, came on north as far as Norman,

looking over the country.

In the 90's I began working with the Caney Brothers Construction Company, railroad builders and helped build a section of a road from Las Vegas, New Mexico, to the West coast of Old Mexico. The next contract was on the Rock Island on that section from Enid south to Fort Worth Texas. Enid was just a cross-road town in 1895. This road ran through the open country with very few settlements of any size when it was built. We used a lot of Mexican labor. We paid them \$8.00 per month and board of beef, beans and hard tack. This \$8.00 in United States money was a high wage for the Mexicans, compared to what they were paid in Old Mexico. These Mexicans slept in quarters set apart for them, and ate at their own tables, away from the white labor. Our grading tools were scrapers - wheel and drag and wheel barrows. Grading in most of the line was comparatively easy.

In 1887 I made three trips through Oklahoma driving cattle to Fort Dodge, Kansas. We came through over the Chisholm Trail the third trip I made. We drove from three thousand to ten thousand head of cattle. Mr. Goodnight was

one of the cattlemen I came with, and Mr. Anderson, a Fort Smith banker and cattleman was another. We had about ten thousand head for him on one trip through Oklahoma. Soon after the turn of the century I began doing oil field and pipe line work. In 1907 I began working for the Texas Company. They, with the Gulf Company, were racing from Tulsa to the Gulf with their pipe lines. These were the first interstate pipe lines to be built. That same year the Texas Company began the building of their refinery in West Tulsa. The Uncle Sam Refinery was in operation then, but more crude oil was being produced than the refinery could handle. The Texas Company had a refinery at Dallas so they sent their surplus products there. The Gulf had a refinery at Port Arthur, Texas. These pipe lines were the eight inch size. They then had relay stations about seventy-five miles apart. Ditching then was done with pick and shovels.

In 1917 I went with the Cosden Company at their refinery, now the Mid-Continent in West Tulsa, site of the old Uncle Sam Refinery. I followed the oil game, pipe line and refinery work until 1931 when I was retired. I have been living in Tulsa since 1917. I was born in Wayne County, Kentucky, July 24th, 1871.