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GHOST TOWNS

From the best information I can gather a "Ghost Town" is a deserted town, or village. If that is true I ought to be an authority on them, for the reason that in 1922 I had been publishing a weekly newspaper for a good many years, and as I was getting run down in health, from staying on the inside, I decided to try out of door work for awhile.

I went to Tulsa and got a job in the circulation department of the Tulsa World, and worked in the field for them for nine months, covering most every town within a radius of one hundred miles around Tulsa, then I went over to the Muskogee Phoenix and Times Democrat and worked their district for eight or nine years.

SLICK, OKLAHOMA THE WORST

Over in the Tulsa district, I found a good sized town, where oil had been struck, by the name of Slick, Oklahoma. It was full of houses, both business and residence houses, but they were practically all deserted.

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Most of the business houses were good substantial frame buildings, and some were brick buildings, but everything but a hotel and one store building was standing idle. The residence houses were principally shacks, one and two rooms with some few larger, and there were a few people scattered about in them. They were principally people who had bought or built property there who were just staying to protect the houses. I ran across one old negro, named Berry Thompson, who by profession was a cook. He told me he had gone to Slick to work at his profession, when the oil town first sprang up and had bought, or built him a three room building to live in, and that he was just staying to keep the mean boys from breaking out his windows, and destroying his building, until he could sell. He was boarding a couple of colored school teachers to make his way.

Up town there were some fine business houses, and a lot of them had the furniture and fixtures still standing in them, just as if the owner had walked out.

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Slick was one of the new oil towns, that was opened up early in the game when oil was first struck in the Tulsa oil field, and sprung up, almost overnight, and went out the same way, when the field had been drilled out, and the oil wells had been pumped dry.

When an oil field is opened up and drilled out, pumps are put in all of the wells and a man is left in charge of a pump station. One engine pumps a number of wells. They have a way of hooking several wells up so that one man and engine pulls a lot of wells. In a few years the oil is all pumped out, and that field is a dead one. That is why Slick became a "ghost town." The town was named for the man who opened up the field.

DEWAR IN OKMULGEE COUNTY

Dewar, in Okmulgee county, is another "ghost town." It is located about three miles east of Henryetta, on the Frisco railroad, and like Slick, it sprung up almost overnight, when the big coal fields, in Okmulgee county were opened up. For a time the field flourished and the

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little town of Dewar had something like 2000 inhabitants when the town was at its best. It filled up with small residence houses, and had a big business district, but when the coal in that section began to play out, strikes set in, and in general the operators could not sell their coal; then business went down, until Dewar was indeed a "ghost town," with but few people left. Both business and residence houses were left to stand idle, and only a few stores and the post office were left to do business.

During Jack Walton's administration the strike situation became so strong in Okmulgee county, that the governor issued a proclamation placing that county under martial law, and sent troops of the National Guard there to help the local officers preserve order. National guardsmen were stationed in all of the little coal towns in the coal field, as well as in Okmulgee and Henryetta.

The union coal men were on a long strike for higher wages, and were picketing the mines. They would line up on each side of the entrance to the mine pits, forcing

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the men, who had taken their places in the mines to pass out between two long lines, that laid in wait for the closing hour, and when a man came out from a depth of several hundred feet in the ground; and started down that long line of union workers they would call him a "scab" and every other bad name they could think of. Both men and women were in line, and sometimes the women would hit the man with something, usually anything they could pick up.

The National Guard put a stop to picketing, and remained in the district, until the strike was settled, and the union miners went back to work.

Other ghost towns in the Okmulgee coal field, that were abandoned for the same reason that Dewar was abandoned were; Schuiter, Kusa, Bryant and a few others.

GHOST TOWNS IN PITTSBURG COUNTY

Krebs, located about three miles east of McAlester, in Pittsburg county is another ghost town, being in the center of the coal mining region, in the McAlester district. It was about the same sized town as Dewar, in Okmulgee county and was abandoned for the same reason; the strike by union

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workers, and a lack of market for the coal that was being mined.

There were many little towns in Pittsburg county, that could be termed "ghost towns", all located in the coal fields, around McAlester, the largest of which is North McAlester.

GHOST TOWNS IN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

Along the Kansas, Oklahoma and Gulf railroad, north of Muskogee I find four other ghost towns, located in the heart of the agricultural district. These towns sprang up every eight or ten miles apart when the K.O.&G first opened up the new railroad from Baxter Springs, Kansas, to Denison, Texas, and each one thought it was going to crowd some other town off the map.

The first one we come to, after leaving Muskogee, north is Pensacola, located on the Grand river, near the spot where it is thought the Grand River Dam will be built. For some reason this town never got away from the boom it took, when first built. It once had a bank, a grain elevator and a number of good stores and residence houses.

But it never did hold up. The bank went broke, the elevator was torn down, the railroad abandoned the depot, and most of the business houses were torn down, or are standing idle.

James S. Wilson, a blue grass raiser from Paris, Kentucky, bought most of the river bottom land adjacent to the town, and used it for a cattle ranch. Just why the town went down, I do not know, but there were three others that went the same route, and might be termed "ghost towns" between there and Dexter Springs, Kansas. They are Ketchum, Bernice and Copland. In each of the places the K.O.&G. have abandoned their depots, and do not keep an agent. A few years back they discontinued their passenger service, north of Muskogee, and the mail is brought into these towns now, by bus, or rural route carriers.

BLUEJACKET ON THE M&A A GHOST TOWN

Bluejacket, on the main line of the M., K., & T. railroad, north of Muskogee is about the only "ghost town" on that line between Muskogee and the Kansas line. For several years back practically all of the business houses have been abandoned, and are standing idle to this day.

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My brother, Mack Carselowey, was County Assessor of Craig county for eight years, from 1924 to 1932. I remember that he assessed the business houses in that town so far below other towns in the county that the Excise Board wanted to know his reasons for doing so. He told them that the houses had been standing idle for years and that the owners of the property could not rent them. The Excise Board were not satisfied with his statement and got in a car and drove to the town and made an investigation, with the result that they let the assessment stand, as he had made it. The business district was one long street, nearly a quarter of a mile long, and nearly all the houses were standing idle, and are still that way.