

JACKSON, EFFIE S.

EST. LBS OF J. M. HALL #13148

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MEMOIRS, J. M. HALL #13148

From material in the files of J. M. Hall--
loaned me before the recent death of Mrs.
J. M. Hall. The J. M. Hall residence
1301 Admiral Boulevard, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Journalist - Effie S. Jackson
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
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It was in 1894 that Carl Schurz, Secretary of the Interior, requested the Creek Indian Council to set aside a right-of-way for the Frisco Railway. The railroad had made Tulsa its terminus in 1882. In the succeeding twelve years a number of buildings had been erected on the north side of First Street, both east and west of Main Street. Schurz suggested that fifty feet on each side of the track be granted except at the station, where 400 feet would be the grant. The council agreed.

Frisco surveyors under their general solicitor set up broken draw-heads along the line of the road that took in ~~300 feet south of the tracks and 100 feet north.~~ That left only 20 feet for all those who had built on Main Street and north of First and all those early business locations on the north side of First Street were left "holding the sack."

These business men were notified by the Frisco solicitor to take leases from the railroad company or move off. I was

sent as a representative of this group of men (I was one of the injured party) to see the solicitor in St. Louis. He refused to grant the pioneers any right to their claim of any of the 100 feet. He even said he could take the whole 400 feet from one side of the tracks if he wished. I appealed the matter to the general manager of the road; he had the good judgment to realize that friendly relations with Tulsa merchants would be good business and so instructed the solicitor to take 200 feet south of the track and 100 feet north of the track.

We had other street troubles earlier in our history. I remember a group of half-a dozen men sought to close First Street. One Indian set posts across the street and others decided they would knock down the fences around the Archer and Hall stores. T. J. Archer came out with his Winchester and said the first man to start would bite the dust. The Creek Indian district judge from Coweta came to Tulsa to settle the dispute. He held his court in the rear of the Hall store. He decided from evidence given by witnesses that First Street was traveled by the public and should remain open to traffic.

We white pioneers early realized that the tactful way to get anything done was through the leadership of prominent Creek citizens of Tulsa. So a dozen of us got together and held secret meetings for the purpose of formulating a petition to be presented to the Creek Council by certain influential Indians, requesting the council to memorialize the government to enter an agreement with the Indians setting aside a certain number of acres for a townsite in each town in the Creek Nation. The idea was to have a group of leading Creek citizens of Tulsa petition the Creek Council for this townsite grant.

Honorable Leo Bennett, an inter-married citizen of the Creek Nation and also Indian agent at Muskogee, visited Tulsa frequently. I made the remark to him on one of his visits that money could be had to pay for the townsite. Money could be advanced to those who could not at that time pay for their lots. Someone overheard the conversation and word spread that a group of white men were going to pay the Creeks for townsites and make those who were already settled pay a high price for their

property. There had already been an understanding that all settlers were to get their lots at cost and the remaining property in the townsite would be disposed of subject to any agreement reached between the Creeks and the Government officials.

When the rumor spread of the "Creek pay-off" a mass meeting was called at a designated time, the place was an upstairs store building at First and Main Streets (Lynch building). The hall filled with men, few of whom were lot or home owners, just men who liked the adventure of a fight. Judge Tollett, United States Commissioner at that time, and I had been in St. Louis at a Democratic rally held in honor of William Jennings Bryan. Fortunately we got back on the afternoon train, heard of the mass meeting and attended it. It was well we did for the belief had spread that the reason we were in St. Louis was to get money for the "pay-off" on the proposed townsites.

We were called upon to explain our St. Louis trip. We did so and emphasized that when the townsites were available everyone should be treated alike. Some drunks were present and some respectable men, not lot or home

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owners, who had had much to say. A motion was made that men representing these two groups formulate a petition and present it to the Creek Council. The motion was absurd because even a drunk knew white men appearing before the Creek Council would be only a farce. In the midst of the melee one man struck another, the lights were blown out, six-shooters clicked. Darkness had a soothing effect, the only injury resulted from the mad rush to get down the stairway.

All this "tempest in a tea-pot" had some good results, it was the beginning of the townsite idea in the Creek Nation.