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Grace Kelley,
Investigator
January 19, 1938.

Interview with D. W. Moulds.
Henryetta, Oklahoma.
Father-H. F. Moulds.
Mother-Miss Harris
Born 1874.

I came to the Territory from Nebraska with my parents in 1894. My twentieth birthday occurred while we were on the road. We had three wagons with horse teams and from nine to ten head of other stock. We entered the Territory at Chetopa, Kansas, and came down the Neosho river about ten miles to a sawmill.

George Nashley who lived at Parsons, Kansas, owned the sawmill. Pick and axe handles were made there. There were four or five families who lived in native lumber box houses. Miami was the nearest town to the sawmill camp but it was just a wide place in the road and had no rail-
we forded the river and went to Welch which was on
road so/the main line of the Katy. This mill was run by steam power.

That summer-1894, I went to Welch to work in the hay-making. That was a great hay country and hay was shipped from there to other parts of the country. All hay countries

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were good cattle countries but there were no cattle closer than the Hip-O brand which was owned by a Texas company and extended from Tulsa to Vinita. One reason that there were no cattle around Welch was because there wasn't enough water for them, it took a great deal of water for cattle. Another reason was if a hay meadow was pastured it was ruined. The grass was eaten off so short that the weeds had a chance to grow. In those days a bale of hay was a bale of grass that had been cured. Now it is weeds and briars. It sold then for 15 cents a bale, now it usually sells for 35 cents.

George Dickson had married a Cherokee girl so he was financially better off than most white men in the country. He owned a big store in Welch which was eighteen miles north of Vinita and he owned two or three balers and stacking outfits. There was another store in Welch but we always traded with Dickson as we were working for him. All through that summer there was a crew baling hay and another crew was stacking hay to be baled in the winter. I don't remember the exact number who worked but I know that seven men are the fewest number who could be in a crew of balers.

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There were just a very few farmers through there so there was no cotton gin needed at Welch. There was a little strip pit, where coal was mined with teams and slips, just west of Welch on Big Cabin Creek.

There were no bridges on the rivers until later. There was a ferry on the Neosho River at Miami run by a white man. This ferry was only used when the river was "up" as the river was forded when it was "down." Another ford was nine miles up the river from there. It was a rock ford with just a riffle of water going over it.

The State Line road was from Chetopa to Coffeyville then on to Caney. Those towns are in Kansas but as the road jogged some instead of being straight it twisted and then went on into the Territory. It went east and west between Kansas and the Territory. I didn't stay at home much but rode around a great deal, staying on the roads where there would be travelers or men working to trade or sell horses or mules.

When I was just a kid--as far back as I can remember, I had a pony. I started trading ponies when I was a boy. I have always followed public work where I could work my

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teams and between jobs I traded.

The north and south trail followed the M. K. & T. Railroad. Other trails branched off from that one. There was a drought in the northern states in 1904 and any time you looked you could see a covered wagon somewhere going either one way or the other. It seemed that the whole world was on wheels--but they were wagon wheels as there were no cars or tractors at that time.

I have made my living with horses but I can truthfully say that I never left anyone in need of a horse if I was going or could go his or her way. If a man had a lame horse I would either hitch one of mine, or a pair of mine, in and help him as far as I could. Sometimes people were in a hurry but I wasn't ever in too much of a hurry to be bothered.

People were different then than they are now. Everybody helped the ones who needed help. Every farmer had a crib of corn or hay, four or five cows and some hogs.

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They had plenty and were not as poor as a farmer, that is the average farmer, of today is.

I worked in 1902 on the Fort Smith and Western Railroad building ten miles west of Okemah. That was the highest fill on that line. Dave Griffin was the contractor from Kansas City. He had other sub-contractors under him. There was an average of fifty men and from eighty-five to a hundred pair of teams. I drove six pair on a dirt machine. There were two horses to the wheeler, from four to six to the plow for the wheeler, three mules to the dump wagon and eighteen head of horses to the dirt machine. The dirt machine loaded the wagons from the cut and the dirt was hauled to the fills and dumped. We had a big commissary and several of the sub-contractors got their provisions from it. Mrs. Dave Griffin stayed in there and Dave's brother kept the time. There was a big boarding tent and two big Irishmen did the cooking. Griffin had the grading of about thirty-five miles but he let about a mile to each sub-contractor. The majority of the eldest tramps that we have now were dirt hands on

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the railroads when they were being built. That was all they knew but they knew just how to do the filling to make it level for the ties. Only "experienced" men were wanted.

The Fort Smith and Western, the Midland Valley and the K.O.&G. were built on this wage scale; drivers got \$1.75 a day; a man and one team got \$3.50. A day was supposed to be ten hours but they always worked overtime. The time was figured at 17½ cents an hour. We thought that was good wages and that we would get rich. It was better than it sounds for I could get the same shirt for 50 cents that I have to pay a \$1.15 for now. Good shoes cost \$1.50. Eggs sold for two to three dozen for 25 cents. You see money went farther in those days so it didn't take so much. After the grading was done the railroad section outfit followed and put down the ties and rails. You might be through for quite a while before they came to your stretch because the whole contract would be worked on at the same time. They didn't start putting the ties down until the grading was done and some of the sub-contractors would have harder places to level out than others, so that it would take them

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longer to level or grade the same length of road-bed.

The work train followed the section crew with material.

There wasn't any Okemah when we were grading ten miles west of there: a little store and beer joint started but as there was no railroad there we had to haul our feed from the Frisco railroad at Weleetka. There were just negroes and Indians who lived in little log houses in the bottoms. From our camp to Prague (which is in the opposite direction from Weleetka) there were twenty miles with not a house and where you would never see a person. When we went to Weleetka we would just wind through the hills. We always had four horses or mules to the wagon. We used to stop at a store--the old McDermott store which was about the size of a large room. I imagine about ten feet by twenty feet. It was just a little country store on a ranch but they kept soda pop so we stopped there for "pop." Griffin's stock was as big as he could get so it took a great deal to feed them. He wouldn't look at corn for a feed but ordered good little white northern oats. They came in six bushel sacks--and

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were surely hard to handle. We hauled about two hundred bushels to the wagon and it took us two days and part of the night to make the trip.

There was a stable boss whose only duty was to see that there was plenty of oats in the box or trough at all times. He was told that that was what he was being paid for. They weren't measured but it took about a hundred bushels of oats at night and about fifty bushels at five o'clock in the morning. The troughs were big and little boxes were not used. The teamsters had to be good to the stock if they expected to keep their jobs. The special care of the stock was to insure good pulling power.

On one trip I thought that I would surely die. We had no water to drink except some pond water where the cattle drank--it had a green scum over it so you know it wasn't fit for a person. That was in July and August and we knew what ice was but we never had any. It's a wonder that we didn't all die and there was quite a bit of sickness that fall. I was having chills every other day but I was still working. We had to go down for a load of powder and dynamite. I knew that we were over-loaded but

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we weren't driving too fast so we thought that we could make the trip without any trouble. When we got to a place within a hundred yards of the McDermott store our reach or coupling pole broke. I borrowed an axe from the store and made a coupling pole but we had to unload the wagon and then reload it after it was fixed. I believe that was the hardest work I ever did for I was so sick.

There wasn't much grading done that winter out there because that was a sandy country and it rained all winter; I don't think there has ever been as wet a winter as in 1902. It seemed that the whole bottom of the fields fell out. You couldn't get a team over the hills with feed they were so boggy. The next job I was on the grading crew had a camp three miles north of Hanna where there is a little negro town now. There was no Hanna there at that time. Frew and Brambrick had a three mile contract that went to the river. They were a smaller outfit than Griffin's. Griffin couldn't have found room for their things in there. That was a very good farming country though the only house that I know about was an Indian

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house but I don't remember who lived there-- it was right at the camp too. That was on the Fort Smith and Western Railroad.

Then the K.O.&G. Railroad was to come through Henryetta. The Frisco was already built there. I went to work under Hauffman and Kenefick. Kenefick was the father-in-law to Hauffman. I was told that he got the money from across the ocean to build the railroad. Our camp was where Dewar is now but it wasn't there then. Contractors were scattered all along where the railroad would be later. About fifty negroes had their camp about a mile west of ours on the next stretch and they had some bad rock cuts. Jack Anthony had the next mile west or toward Henryetta. Mr. J. W. Scott went through the town and the McDonald brothers had a mile southwest and there were some pretty bad rock cuts.

The only good building in Henryetta was owned by J. M. Wise and it was located on Fourth Street. It is now the John Taylor Hospital owned by Dr. G. A. Kilpatrick. Mr. Wise operated the Wise mines--that is the Wise Slope and the Central Mines. Besides these there were the two

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Whitehead mines. That was in 1904 and others were added to the list as the years passed. Spelter City was a good hay meadow. Wild Cat, a negro town, was the closest town east of Henryetta. It was a pretty good sized town at one time but there are just a few houses there now. It is just called Cat now instead of Wild Cat.

I kept following the work and trading but lived in Henryetta--though I didn't always stay there. It took a great deal of water for our teams so I always looked for the water supply before deciding to move to a place. I've rented a few teams out but loaned more of them to individuals. When I was on a job I hired them out always. Park and Moran put the paving in at Henryetta and Henry Bonar, Dalph Reynolds and W. B. Hudson were the outstanding citizens. I had the contract for the last block of the Eagle Pitcher smelter. There was a thirty-two foot fill and it was yardage work. The whole hollow was dammed up for water. Another contract I had was the mile on the Seventy-five highway which is called the Missing Link. I put in all the switches on the Frisco from Henryetta to the Victoria mines,

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Bryant and on to Bad Creek and I put in another switch for Jack Fretwell. When it was a hurry job I had from ten to twelve men working under me and twenty-one head of horses. In narrow places and days there wasn't enough room for so many teams as they would be in each other's way. B. A. Jackson was a building contractor and put the Blaine Theater where a garage was. I had the contract for the basement for the building to go on up--and went ^{on} to other buildings where teams were needed.

One set of harness cost me \$250.00. It was more to make a pretty team show up--and my stock was all pretty as well as good. An ordinary set of oil field harness would cost \$150.00. A farmer's plain harness cost about \$30.00. This expensive set of harness had many different colored celluloid rings to look pretty, much good strong leather--a big leather housing over the hames and collar and there was a great deal of work making them. These had to be strong and we wanted them to be pretty so we had to pay more for them.