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W. T. Holland,
Investigator,
Mar. 30, 1938.

An Interview With J. C. Murphy,
Tulsa, Oklahoma.

I am a native of Greene County, East Tennessee, where I was born September 12, 1861. It seemed that the trend was westward in my early days and Texas seemed to be the mecca of most people. The southern states were so impoverished following the Civil War and so many buildings had to be rebuilt which had been burned by Union forces that it was discouraging to the people. "Carpet bag" rule, too, had something to do with the exodus. However, in 1879, when I came to Texas, "carpet bag" rule had been run out, but Texas offered attractive futures for settlers, so I came to Wilbarger County, Texas, and settled near Vernon.

I married Ada Lee Collier at Vernon in 1880 and lived in that county until 1893. My wife, little girl and I came to Purcell in a buggy. I had a cousin at Purcell, so I left my family there and went on to make the "Strip Run." I made the "Run" from

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the Creek County line, as I was told that it was a legal starting point. However, after staking my claim on the hundred and sixty acres where Jennings now stands, I was told that I held the claim illegally. A northern man who had a claim near saw my situation and offered to lend me the money to pay off the other claimant, so I borrowed this money at 5% and paid for the claim. This was the southwest quarter on which Jennings was built.

George W. Hall, a friend, and I made a plat of the land, divided it into town lots and began to sell the lots; at first, one at a time, but later we had an auction and disposed of most of them. We needed a forty acre tract adjoining us, which had been filed on by Joe Jennings. We could hold land by putting up business houses on it so we put up three shacks, or tents and put a handful of groceries in there and established our claim. Jennings came up about that time and wanted to know what it all meant. Before we could tell him, he wheeled his horse and fled. We saw in the distance two horsemen coming as fast as they could. They came up and asked if Joe Jennings

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had just left. While I thought it was Jennings, he had not said so, and I hadn't seen him before," so I told the horsemen that I had not seen the man before and he had not told me his name. Jennings was accused of stealing a team of horses from a settler and these two men were deputy United States Marshals. Later on, to satisfy Jennings, we told him that we would name the town Jennings after him, for the forty acres; he agreed, so that was how and why the name Jennings was given to the town.

Tents and frame building began to spring up. I put up a drug store and later sold it. I bought a tract of timber land nearby and Tom I. Davidson and I cut and hauled this timber to a sawmill and sold the rough lumber to settlers. My first home there was a dugout. I went back to Purcell in December, 1893, and got my family and had the dugout nearly ready when we returned.

I dug down about four feet, put logs about three feet above the ground and piled the dirt outside the log wall. The top was made of slabs from the sawmill, covered with dirt and sod. I built a rock fireplace and chimney,

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had a rough plank floor and it was comfortable. Hall and I dug, or had dug, a well about the center of the business district. This was our first source of water, later all the families dug or drilled their own wells. G. W. Canfield and Brother had one of the first grocery stores in Jennings. Bishop and McCain had a general store and G. S. Van Emmons had a hardware and implement store. Some men opened up their stores in tents. Van Emmons did. Dr. Burton was the first doctor and Reverend Schneider was the first preacher. He was a Congregationalist. G. W. Hall and I furnished the lumber and helped to build the first school house at Jennings. It was about twenty by thirty or forty feet of rough lumber. We made benches out of rough lumber. This building was used as a church on Sunday.

Treese and Son put up the first cotton gin. We hauled groceries and supplies from Tulsa and Perry, each about the same distance from Jennings. All such supplies were hauled overland in wagons. Frank Lake, an old friend of mine from Texas and my former neighbor near Vernon, Texas, was the first sheriff of Pawnee County. He appointed me,

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or through his influence I was appointed, the first "J. P." at Jennings. I got Lake to appoint my friend and associate, Tom Davidson, a deputy sheriff at Jennings. I was a Justice of the Peace there for seven years.

We could not do much with the outlaws. There were plenty of wooded hills and deep gulches and a few caves near Jennings, which were used as hideouts for a bunch of outlaws. These outlaws would come to town and have good times and scare the folks nearly to death, with their shooting and yelling. I would talk to them, and persuade them to not hurt anybody. Doolin, Bittercreek, Pierce and others made their headquarters near Jennings. I was in Ingalls just after that fight, they had just picked up the bodies. I was given a warrant for the arrest, and the return dead or alive of one "Red Buck", a noted and dangerous outlaw. He was wanted for horse stealing. So I gave the warrant to Tom Davidson, but he persuaded me to serve it. I thought I knew where the horses were, so with the farmer who had lost the horses, we set out for the Miller ranch. We both had rifles and

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expected trouble, but hoped we could avoid it. We rode up to the ranch house, alighted and I got behind one gate post, and my friend got behind the other. I called to Miller, who was in the house, to come out and told him that I had the door covered. He came out. I told him we came for the horses. He said OK he would go to the barn and get them. We kept him covered until we got the horses and left. While we were waiting I saw a man go out the back way, mount his horse and leave. I thought it was Red Buck. Miller was probably a victim of this outlaw, as a man didn't dare to refuse an outlaw food or lodging. Many kept the outlaws against their own wishes and I am sure it was that way with Miller. Red Buck was later dynamited in a dugout by United States Marshals as he refused to surrender. Our first jail at Jennings was a dugout. We used it principally for drunks. One Ira Miller, a young would-be bad man, caused a lot of trouble at Jennings, by carryin' tales to the outlaws of what, he said, the citizens had said about them.

Miss Blanche Arnold was the first school teacher at Jennings. It was a "pay" school. Miss Arnold was eighteen

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years of age. She later attended school and graduated from the Normal School at Edmond. Mrs. Murphy later made her wedding dress. Mrs. Murphy had the first and a very profitable millinery business at Jennings. Those were the days when the hats were made to order. She bought the wire frames, straw braid, ribbon and flowers, and made the hat to suit the customer. She frequently had to work late at night to keep up with her orders. Along about 1900, I built a stone hotel at Jennings. It was two stories high with eighteen rooms, bed rooms, lobby and dining room, and sample room, etc., and was made of native stone, plastered inside. It was a nice building for the time and received quite a writeup in the Jennings News the opening day. I have been in Tulsa since 1907, where I have engaged in the real estate business in a small way, buying lots, building on them, selling them etc., and I have one daughter, Jennie Lee Payne of Tulsa.