

Interview with T. C. Hood
Blanchard, Oklahoma

Field Worker - Robert H. Boatman
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I was born June 5, 1859, in the State of Tennessee. When I first came to the territory, in 1890, it was a very different country from what it is today. There were only a few small towns with no roads to speak of at all.

There were several settlements of Indians scattered throughout the entire territory. The Indians lived mostly in small settlements and did very little work. They lived principally on wild game, as there was plenty of game here then.

The country was filled with turkey, deer, quail, coon, mink and practically all kinds of small game.

The streams were full of fish of all kinds from the game mountain trout to the lazy cat.

The Indians' homes were generally rude shacks built of logs and sticks, the roofs were generally made of grass and mud.

The Indians kept a good number of ponies, sometimes one Indian would own as many as fifty head. These

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ponies were small, weighing from five to six hundred pounds. An Indian was considered to be a big stockman if he owned twenty head of these ponies. These ponies were used as saddle ponies only and were worthless as far as their value for field service was concerned.

At Norman I established myself in the blacksmith business. After the townsite of Norman had been fully established the people just seemed to come from no where and the town grew very rapidly; then came the opening of the Cherokee Strip and I went to seek my fortune. I ran from Orlando, which is north of Guthrie, at the given signal, which was at 12 noon. I set off and ran to Black Bear. That section it was plain to be seen had been "Soonered," for some of the people had already plowed around their claim and then staked their flag later.

I turned and started for Red Rock, in another section, some few miles away. It was night when I arrived at this point and I thought for sure I had found my garden of paradise. I at once drove stakes

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and set up my flag. Then when it came daylight, to my disgust it was plain to see my claim had been staked the day before, so I pulled stakes and returned to Norman.

Later, 1895, I made the race in the Kickapoo run near Shawnee with no better results than at the Cherokee Opening.

The Indian Territory that is now known as the great state of Oklahoma was first claimed by none other than sooners. I again returned to Norman and remained for some time until the town of Blanchard was established, then came to Blanchard in 1912, where I have since been connected with the blacksmith business and the development of the country. I expect to remain here the rest of my life.

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