

OKLAHOMA
TERRITORY

TERRITORIAL TALES

Bits of
History
Before
Statehood

INDIAN
TERRITORY

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Ailing Outlaws Put Doctors in Danger

The life of a pioneer physician in Indian Territory was fraught with hardships and dangers.

Cattle thieves, robbers and murderers lived among law-abiding citizens, and they called upon doctors for services. An encounter with some of these was related by Dr. Thomas A. Blaylock of Madill in Thoburn's "History of Oklahoma."

A strapping fellow, booted and spurred, stopped at Dr. Blaylock's gate and informed him that a comrade was sick in the mountains about 18-20 miles away and needed services of a doctor. Blaylock took his stock of medicines in his handbag, mounted his horse and rode into a rough, sparsely settled area.

In a wild canyon they stopped at a cabin beside which was a pitched tent. Inside the cabin a sick man was resting on a couch. The camp was inhabited only by men, the doctor noted, all of whom were well armed.

The doctor diagnosed the ailment, prescribed medicine and after two or three doses, announced his services were no longer needed.

When he arose to go, he was blocked at the doorway by a man who coolly informed him that he must remain there the rest of the day. "And when you go, it must be on the condition that you keep your mouth shut," the guard warned.

Men came and went but always one or two of them stood guard over the doctor with a shotgun. He kept his mouth shut and it was not until weeks afterward that Blaylock realized from news reports that he had been a guest of one of the southwest's notorious outlaw gangs — the Daltons.