

OKLAHOMA
TERRITORY

TERRITORIAL TALES

Bits of
History
Before
Statehood

INDIAN
TERRITORY

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Religious Strife Common Early On

A description of pioneer life in northeastern Oklahoma when that area was a territory was given by Roscoe D. Lahman in J.B. Thoburn's "History of Oklahoma" (Pub. 1916). Lahman traveled extensively in that section before he settled in Tulsa to establish a baking company.

The Lahmans moved to Vinita in 1902 and drove over much of the Cherokee Nation "when all roads led to a gate." He said, "Take the main-traveled road" was the direction given at every turkey-foot intersection when the bridges were almost unknown and a ford was often a risky venture even if the traveler knew his horses could swim.

In 1904, the Lahmans moved to Bartlesville, where he went into the oil leasing business. They bought a two-room house with hot and cold water — the hot on the cook stove and the cold three blocks away. Rubber boots were a necessity, for mud was everywhere.

Religious controversies were frequent in the territories. Spiritualism and unorthodox religions tangled with the established bodies. In 1907, a Chicago theologian's claim that "the theory of Jewish patriarchs were tribal myths" had repercussions among many territorial congregations, even though the claimant apparently never came here.

The pastor of one Oklahoma City church resigned because he was unable to persuade elders of his congregation to raise his pay. He said he couldn't support his family on \$10 a week. The National Congregational Council, meeting in Ohio, declared "Greed for the dollar is dragging our young men into commercial life, to the detriment of the ministry," a story in The Daily Oklahoman reported.