

OKLAHOMA  
TERRITORY

## TERRITORIAL TALES

Bits of  
History  
Before  
Statehood

INDIAN  
TERRITORY

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# Pioneer Tales Stronger Than Oklahoma's Winds

Between election campaigns, when politicians sometimes took liberties with the truth, pioneers would often tell yarns for their own amusement and for the amazement of newcomers.

One of the best-known tales is that every pioneer home on the Plains had a "Crowbar Hole" to test wind velocity. If the crowbar only bends when thrust out, it is safe to go out, but if it breaks off, better stay inside.

The Daily Oklahoman in 1907 reported from Lawton that a corpulent Altus farmer offered a restaurant owner 75 cents for all the oysters he could eat. His offer was accepted, but the cafe owner lost. The farmer ate 25 dozen, walked out, jumped on his mule and galloped out of town "full as a tick."

Pithole Pete, a fabulous tool-pusher in the territorial oil fields, tamed a gray wolf named Renfrow that was "derrick high and slushpit wide," according to hand-me-down records.

Pete hitched the wolf to a buckboard and established a daily mail route between Kiefer, in Indian Territory, and Oil City, Pa. The railroads became jealous and challenged the wolf to race a Santa Fe engine from Oklahoma City to Ardmore.

Renfrow was about to win when the engineer threw a crowbar at him, slicing the beast in two. Pete, who was following, patched him together with some instant-cure Oklahoma petroleum salve, but got him together wrong with two legs on the ground and two in the air. Renfrow still won, because when he got tired of running on one side, he would flip over and run on the other.