

OKLAHOMA
TERRITORY

TERRITORIAL TALES

Bits of
History
Before
Statehood

INDIAN
TERRITORY

SEP 14 1982

Creek Named For Ranch Brand

In the summer of 1876, L.C. Wantland, who later became a Purcell banker, returned from school to his father's ranch in the Chickasha Nation. They decided to establish a new ranch in the Unassigned Lands about 30 miles to the north.

Choosing his foreman and several men, young Wantland followed the Arbuckle Trail to a place several miles southeast of present downtown Oklahoma City. Wantland explored the country to the east, while his foreman rode over the area to the west looking for the most advantageous spot for the new ranch headquarters.

When they returned to camp, the foreman told of exploring the valley of a small creek that headed at the divide between the two Canadian rivers and empties into the North Canadian. One of the cowpunchers asked: "How about the channel of the creek? Is it straight?"

"No — it's crooked as lightning!" the foreman replied.

The headquarters was located on another creek, but the creek explored by the foreman later was referred to as "the creek that is as crooked as lightning" and so it still is.

The creek where the ranch headquarters was located got its name from the ranch's brand. This was a tall Y followed by an O. Cowpunchers read the brand as "crutch O." Eventually, the Wantland ranch became known as the "Crutch-O" and the stream was named Crutch-O Creek. Later there was a Crutch-O school and Crutch-O Community.