

OKLAHOMA
TERRITORY

TERRITORIAL TALES

Bits of
History
Before
Statehood

INDIAN
TERRITORY

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First 'Highway' Marked on Poles

An early booster of good roads in Oklahoma was George Washington Young of Alva. Before moving there in 1901 he had been a county commissioner and legislator in Nebraska. He continued to work for better roads after he bought land near the city limits.

A few years later an item in The Daily Oklahoman reported:

"The first interstate highway planned under the provision of the new road law was launched at Alva Saturday with a pole-raising to celebrate the marking of the Young Highway from Alva to Oklahoma City. The road is named in honor of George W. Young, president of the Oklahoma Good Roads Assn."

The story said a cement pole marking the start of the route was unveiled under the sponsorship of the Alva Commercial Club. The route followed was not the most direct line of travel to Oklahoma City.

"Immediately after the ceremonies the first lap of the road, running from Cherokee to Alva, was marked by the Cherokee boosters. Twenty-four automobile loads of Cherokee good roads boosters marked at least six telephone poles in each mile with circles, with the turns plainly marked. ... The start was made by assigning a mile to each car, each being equipped with paint and brushes."

The story added that the following Monday the lap of the road between Cherokee and Helena, and hence to Goltry, would be marked. It stated the road had been designated as a state highway and that a movement was "on foot" to have it oiled "all the way to Oklahoma (City)."