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# HISTORY OF STRONG CITY, OKLAHOMA

*by James Caldwell Strong*

Strong City, Oklahoma, was dedicated the 25th day of June, 1912. The property was deeded from E. A. and Maud Humphrey the 17th day of June, 1912. Located in Roger Mills County in the south 1/2 of section 24-T14N-R23W and the north 1/2 of the north 1/2 of section 25-T14N-R23W, an area also known as the "Snaky Bend" of the Washita River.

Strong City was named in honor of Clinton Riley Strong, born the 31st day of March, 1877, to R. B. and Sarah Strong. R. B. and Sarah Strong's original homestead was east of Parkersburg, Oklahoma, which was a shipping point about five miles west of what is now Clinton, Oklahoma. The Strongs settled there in 1898 and on that property today is still what is called the "Cow Pond" which is where the "C.O.W." Railroad obtained its much needed water. The "C.O.W." Railroad will be discussed in detail later.

Known as a stalwart young man, Clint Strong joined his mother on the 16th day of September, 1903, in Parkersburg. His Father was bucked off a horse and killed in 1901. Having drifted into Oklahoma from Arkansas where he had had a not too profitable horse and mule business at Paragould, Arkansas. With the blood of adventure running madly through his veins, he was following the settlement of the new territory.

From Parkersburg he just naturally drifted on into the newly formed town of Clinton and there in 1908 he and a close friend, T. J. Nance, formed a partnership. With Strong as the promoter they built a railroad 55 miles northwest of Clinton to what is now Strong City. Approximately \$60,000 was subscribed by Clinton and other communities that would be benefited by the rail-

road. At a cost of nearly one million dollars the Clinton and Oklahoma Western Railroad was built through the towns of Stafford, Butler, McClure, Herring and on into Strong City. After a few years during which Strong and Nance operated the railroad together, Nance was killed in an accident on the same railroad which he had helped build. The "C.O.W." Railroad was later acquired by the Santa Fe Railroad.

By 1913 Strong City had a population of about 600 people and was the largest town in Rogers Mills County, also one of the largest in western Oklahoma. In 1912 the Cotton Exchange Bank moved from Cheyenne, the designated county seat of Roger Mills County, to the new town. The First State Bank was organized by the people living in Strong City. The town also had two grocery stores, three general stores, three lumberyards, two dry goods stores, a hotel, four newspapers and four doctors. There was even talk about moving the county seat from Cheyenne to Strong City. The residents of Cheyenne got wind of this and raised money for a water system to build the Cheyenne Short Line, called the "Calf." By doing this Cheyenne kept the county seat. On the 26th day of October, 1914, R. B. Strong, Jr., was born to R. B. (Clint's brother) and Calla Strong. He was the first and only Strong born in Strong City.