

Transcript

Oral history with Fred Ewing, 1957.

Interviewer: Tell us about when Purcell came to town.

Ewing: Well, Old Tom had been a man that come from across the line in here. He was an old whiskey runner. And he had camped on the Pothole, he'd be about six miles up the Pothole from Magrath, him and George... At that time, a man...he was in with a man of Dave Akers. And there was some argument come up over a horse in the corral. Dave Akers was going to take the horse out, and Tom said he wasn't, and Tom shot him.

Interviewer: Right in the ground.

Ewing: Right in the ground. So then the police went up and arrested old Tom. And he was put in Stony Mountain for three years. Well, now, he just come out of the Stony Mount...he just come out of jail and landed here in Lethbridge. Well, he'd been up on the Pothole and he'd come down to Lethbridge, and he'd put the horses in the stable. And he goes, and when he went to go out then, why, he was going to go out without paying. So, I was warned about this, I was working for Whitney in the livery stable at the time.

Interviewer: So, he wasn't going to pay his...

Ewing: I wasn't going to pay it. Well, I was young then, and I wasn't going to let him go out. So him and I came together. Right there. So in the meantime, he went down to see Curly about this. Tom Kirkham, just as he went out the door, Tom Kirkham come in, Tom run a hardware store just there on Third Avenue, right where the Kirkham Block is.

Interviewer: Yes, by the Garden Hotel, you know.

Ewing: He says, "Kid, didn't you know who you was fighting there?" I said, no. Says, "I'd have let him shoot you." So he told me it was Tom Purcell.

Interviewer: How did you feel then?

Ewing: Well, it didn't bother me. No. He was away.

Interviewer: Being a young fellow, I guess that would be, that would be quite a lot of excitement to think you'd tangled with the famous Tom Purcell.

Ewing: Oh, I'd been in a tougher spot than that one time.