

COLEY, LOREN

INTERVIEW

9509

240

Form A-(S-149)

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

COOLEY, LOREN.

INTERVIEW.

9609.

Field Worker's name Linnaeus B Ranck.This report made on (date) December 29, 1937.1. Name Loren Cooley.2. Post Office Address Shattuck, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 18805. Place of birth Cherryvale, Kansas.6. Name of Father D. C. Cooley. Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____.

OOLEY, LOREN.

INTERVIEW.

9609.

Linnaeus B. Ranck,
Investigator,
December 29, 1937.

An Interview With Loren Ooley,
Shattuck, Oklahoma.

Like a number of old-timers in this section Mr. Ooley lived just a few miles over the line in Texas from the west end of the Cherokee Strip several years prior to the Strip opening and was in and over the territory which later became Oklahoma about as much as he was in Texas..

With his parents the family drove from Cherryvale, Kansas, via Kiowa and on southwest through the Strip and located on Wolf Creek just a few miles west of the Texas-Cherokee Strip boundary. This was in 1885. They came through Fort Supply on this trip and laid over there for five days. There were seventeen hundred Indians being held at Fort Supply at that time under close guard of the troops at the fort. They were camped in the fork of Beaver and Wolf Creeks.

According to Mr. Ooley the military authorities at Fort Supply occasionally permitted bands of fifty

OOLEY, LOREN.

INTERVIEW.

9609.

-2-

of these Indians at one time to leave their camp and the post area to hunt in this quarter of the Strip. As a rule though the hunting party was always accompanied by some scouts from the fort. About the only trouble these Indians made was stealing everything they could get away with.

Mr. Ooley's father established a ranch in Texas. At first the Ooley family got their mail at Fort Supply and their supplies from either Kiowa or Dodge City, Kansas, and usually they freighted from Kiowa; a round trip requiring from two to three weeks. A well defined and good trail led to Kiowa in those days by way of Fort Supply and over Strip territory the greater part of the way.

When the Ooleys settled in Texas the famous Box T Ranch had its headquarters on Long Creek just a few miles over the line in the Cherokee Strip according to Mr. Ooley. The Box T. cattle ranged over the western end of the Strip and into Texas. The Ooley's cattle ranged into the Strip some, too. This arrangement brought Ooley into Oklahoma often though he lived in Texas.

COLEY, LOREN.

INTERVIEW.

9609.

-3-

In those days the famous scout, Amos Chapman, was riding this country more or less with a force of Indian scouts or policemen as his force was often referred to. Chapman was harsh and ruthless sometimes with men whom he found in the Strip without good reason for their being within its boundaries; this was true of his treatment of hunting parties if and when he came upon them in either the Strip country or the Cheyenne-Arapaho Reservation to the south. Chapman was known to have arrested a single hunter in this end of the Strip and to have marched him on foot ahead of a detachment of scouts clear back to Fort Supply and there lodged the offender in the guard house for a period. When the cowmen were ordered to stay out of the Strip with their cattle which included the Box T outfit, Coley's neighbor, the restraining proclamation in practice and effect amounted to a ridiculous sham because Chapman who was largely charged with enforcing it in this end of the Strip at least was easily "fixed" by the ranchmen to disregard the prohibitive regulation. Occasionally, Chapman and his Indian scouts would drive cattle out but the next day or so they would be back and.

OOLEY, LOREN.

INTERVIEW.

9609.

-4-

would range at will without being molested by Government authority.

When Ooley was about nine years old his father sent him from their ranch to the Box T headquarters over the line in the Strip to borrow some sugar. The distance was about five miles and young Ooley rode a pony. Within a mile or two of the Box T ranch house on the way he met Amos Chapman and about twenty stalwart Indian scouts. Without any warning one of the Indians dashed up to Ooley grabbed both bridle reins out of his hands and started leading the pony away from the remainder of the force. This action frightened Ooley yet he felt that Chapman would not permit him to be harmed in any way although the scout leader made no effort to restrain the Indian buck. Some hundred yards distant from Chapman and the others in the detachment the Indian handed the bridle reins back to Ooley and then gave the boy's pony several sharp lashes over its rump with his heavy rawhide quirt. Ooley's pony nearly jumped from under him in bounding away from the mischievous buck Indian. The entire scout party then roared and whooped with laughter at this prank. Ooley

OOLEY, LOREN.

INTERVIEW.

9609.

-5-

still curses Chapman for condoning it. These scouts were outfitted completely with regulation cavalry equipment and presented quite a unique and imposing appearance.

In the fore part of 1894 the Ooleys came to the Strip. The father filed on a homestead upon which the town of Fargo now is sitting. Loren Ooley went to work on the famous old H. Steeple Ranch the headquarters of which was only a few miles northwest of his father's claim. He became the H. Steeple's first horse wrangler.

At that time there was nothing at Fargo but a pump station by the railroad track and a box car for a station depot. The Santa Fe had named the station Whitehead. The senior Ooley put up a small store that year on his claim, the first business establishment of any description or kind and this was the beginning of what years later became the town of Fargo. A year or two later the father of Mr. Ooley got a surveyor from the Persimmon Flats country southeast of Woodward and had a portion of his homestead surveyed and platted for a townsite. Mr. Ooley named this town Oleta. To the railroad company, however, and to the United States Postal Service it was still named

COLEY, LOREN,

INTERVIEW.

9609.

-6-

Whitehead. The town of Oleta expanded and a post office and railway station were built and the place was known as Whitehead. Just a few years past the turn of the century the Santa Fe took the initial step to remedy this confusing situation. An official of the line came to Whitehead-Oleta, according to Loren Coley and prevailed upon his father to agree with the wishes of the railroad giving the town a new and entirely different name. In the course of the discussion between the two men on the subject the Santa Fe official finally suggested that the town be given the name of "Fargo". The senior Coley promptly agreed and the railroad man went immediately to the railroad station and notified the postal authorities at Washington of the change. Henceforth it became Fargo instead of either Whitehead or Oleta. Mr. Coley now operates a large hardware store in Shattuck.