

HENSHAW, C. L.

INTERVIEW

#8783

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

HENSHAW, C. L.

INTERVIEW.

8783.

Field Worker's name Robert W. Small.

This report made on (date) September 28, 1937. 1937

1. Name C. L. Henshaw.

2. Post Office Address Tonkawa, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 403 North 7th Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 15 Year 1871.

5. Place of birth West Virginia.

6. Name of Father M. L. Henshaw Place of birth W. Virginia.

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Emily Payne Henshaw. Place of birth W. Virginia.

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 5.

Robert W. Small,  
Interviewer.  
Sept. 28, 1937.

An Interview With C. L. Henshaw,  
403 North 7th Street, Tonkawa, Okla.

On December 15th, 1871, C. L. Henshaw, was born in West Virginia and his parents moved to Wichita, Kansas, in the year of 1886.

Mr. Henshaw had always lived at home with his father and worked hard on the farm. A week before the opening of the Cherokee Outlet to settlement Mr. Henshaw's father gave him \$35.00 to go to Hunnewell, Kansas, and register for the run.

When he arrived at Hunnewell he got into the line that had formed to register, and stood in line one-half day before getting registered. After the registration he stayed at Hunnewell till the day of the opening when he entered the race from a point just west of Hunnewell; riding a good horse he started south across the prairie at the sound of the signal gun. He rode almost due south, slightly to the west, and crossed the Salt Fork River and staked a claim, his location being the Southwest Quarter of Section 22, Township 25 N., Range 3 West, which was a distance of about twenty-seven miles from the starting point. He made the run in two hours and twenty minutes. He carried a canteen of water with him, a little of which he gave his horse and drank

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the remainder himself at intervals during the day and night.

After staking his claim he and a neighbor claimant became acquainted and the two men slept together on the bare prairies that night after which he went to Enid to file on the claim but the immense crowd of claimants waiting to file was so great that he returned to his claim and then back to his father's place in Kansas, where he worked till his number was reached to file, when he returned to Enid and filed on his claim.

He plowed a narrow strip of ground around the claim and built a dugout and hauled poles from the Salt Fork River to use in building a shed for stock after which he went back to Kansas to work some more; the \$35.00 which his father gave him when he started to register for the run was all the money he had to use during all this time which he had been going back and forth to his claim. He also paid his filing fee out of this \$35.00.

Mr. Henshaw worked away from his claim for short periods of time, then returned and stayed awhile and went away again; some of his work was done in the Osage country where he broke sod for a farmer.

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In the Spring of 1894. he broke up fifty acres of sod on his claim and planted ten acres to kaffir, leaving forty acres to be planted in the Fall of '94 to wheat. His kaffir made only a little feed on account of the dry weather; in the Fall he planted the forty acres to wheat that he had broken in the Spring previous and then continued to break out the land as fast as he could between times when he was working away from his claim.

His wheat made a yield of three bushels per acre in 1895 and his kaffir and other feed crops were very light. The following year he planted crops again with about the same results in yield. In the Fall of 1896 he planted eighty acres to wheat and the following Summer he harvested about twenty bushels of wheat per acre and the other crops were correspondingly good. The year of 1896 was their first good crop year but good crop years came regularly for a period of several years afterward.

In 1897 Mr. Henshaw built a frame dwelling and made other substantial improvements on his farm. About this time he was married.

The first Sunday School in the community was held in private homes and Church services were occasionally held in homes till a school house was built; then the school

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house was used for a church also.

On one occasion when the community was holding a Christmas tree program at the school house the weather was so agreeable that Mr. Henshaw took header boxes to the school house and made a platform outside the building and a real good time was had by a throng of people who came for the occasion and witnessed the platform for speakers built of header boxes.

Mr. Henshaw raised all kinds of stock and was very successful with hogs, raising the red kind mostly. At no period was he ever troubled with cholera or other disease among his hogs.

His nearest grain market was Pond Creek, a distance of eighteen miles. He sold all his wheat the first few years at 35¢ to 50¢ cents per bushel, but everything he had to buy was correspondingly cheap and he made a little money all the time. Cattle were worth from 2¢ to 3¢ cents per pound and hogs from 3¢ to 4¢ per pound; a good horse could be bought from \$25.00 to \$50.00. A pair of men's overalls cost about 60¢ and flour was 50¢ for a sack of forty-eight pounds.

Clothing and all kinds of food stuff were cheap in the early days. After the seasons became more bountiful because

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rainfall  
of more Mr. Henshaw began to rent other lands nearby and to farm on a large scale and this continued from year to year and he got to buying additional lands, at one time having become involved in debt for land to the extent of \$17,000.00 but he was a hard and consistent worker and a good manager and he paid off all his indebtedness without any trouble and had many acres of valuable land.

Most of Mr. Henshaw's land was put into wheat and alfalfa and he made money from all his farm products except for the year of 1915 which was the hardest year of his life on the farm because it rained almost continually and he lost acres on acres of wheat after it had been put into the shock and his alfalfa hay was ruined after each cutting, almost.

He was \$900.00 poorer at the end of the harvest year of 1915 than he was at the beginning not counting his work. The loss was occasioned by too much rain at the wrong time. The green bugs destroyed the oat crop one year and did some damage to wheat but at no other time did any kinds of insect inflict serious damage to crops in his community.

The old homestead is still in the Henshaw family although Mr. C. L. Henshaw now lives at Tonkawa.