

HOFFMAN, MATTIE MAY. INTERVIEW 10353

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

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HOFFMAN, MATTIE MAY (MRS) INTERVIEW. 10353.

Field Worker's name Nora Lorrin.

This report made on (date) March 29, 1938. 1938

1. Name Mrs. Mattie May (Musser) Hoffman.

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 820 South Mitchell Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 23 Year 1883.

5. Place of birth Missouri.

6. Name of Father Bennett S Musser. Place of birth Missouri,  
Musser. 1843.

7. Name of Mother Rebecca (Imbler)/ Place of birth 1843.

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

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Nora Lorrin,  
Investigator,  
March 29, 1938.

Interview With Mrs. Mattie Hoffman,  
820 South Mitchell Street, El Reno.

I was born in Missouri, December 23, 1883. I grew up in Missouri and we came to Geary, Oklahoma, in 1900. We made the trip on the train. I had a brother who lived in the country near Geary and at his continual insistence to come out to this wonderful country, we finally came.

My father ran a little grocery store in Geary. I taught school. My first school was called the Liberty School, and it was near Geary. I taught another school nine miles southwest of Watonga. This was a log school house, and it was so rickety that it had to be braced to keep it from falling over. It was built on miserable sandy land, and nearly all the farm land around it was similar. About the only crop it would raise was cotton, sand burs, and blackjack trees. There were forty pupils. We had very crude home-made seats, and it was a constant temptation to the boys who carried jack knives to cut their initials, or just to whittle for the sake of cutting on

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something. We would appoint a boy several times a day to take a bucket of water and a tin cup and go up one aisle and down the other, giving the thirsty scholars a drink.

We used to have lots of fun in that neighborhood, as everybody in that community took such a deep interest in the school work and the literaries and box socials. When I went there they had no library so I got up a box supper to take care of the situation. All the women and girls in the neighborhood came and brought their fancy boxes, and the men bid them up as high as they could. One supper brought in \$50.00 and I bought good books for the school with the money. I taught three terms of school in Geary and was married to Alva L. Hoffman in 1905.

We lived in Geary for a few months after we were married. My husband was working for the Rock Island Railroad and they transferred him to Weatherford, then to Blackwell, and later he was transferred to Fort Worth, Texas. In 1908 we moved to El Reno. There were no street car lines here at that time. The Elks building

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had been brought here only a short time before we came, and the beautiful Methodist Church building; at the corner of Rock Island and Watts Streets, was built very shortly after we came. The growth of El Reno has been gradual. In 1908, when we first came here, Fort Reno was a more important cog in the scheme of things than it is now, as there were more soldiers and more activity then there has been since it has been turned into a re-mount station. Most of the Fourth of July celebrations were held in Peaches Park; later, after the War, named Legion Park. We came here in the horse and buggy days and have watched the town grow up until it is fairly well streamlined.