

IVANHOE, CHARLIE.

INTERVIEW

6608

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

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IVANHOE, CHARLIE. INTERVIEW. 6608

Field Worker's name Goldie Turner

This report made on (date) July 12, 1937

1. Name Charlie Ivanhoe

2. Post Office Address Ralston, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1851

5. Place of birth Bavaria

6. Name of Father _____ 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 _____

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Goldie Turner
Field Worker
July 12, 1937

Interview with Charlie Ivanhoe
Ralston, Oklahoma

I was born in Bavaria, in 1851. I first came to the Indian Country in 1870. I was raised in New York City. When I was seventeen my mother died and I decided to come West. I had read many stories about the uncivilized Indians and wanted to come out and help kill them off. However, after a short time among the Indians I changed my mind about them for I discovered they were very honest and friendly.

My first experience among the Indians was when I would go through the country as a cowboy. I worked for Frank Murry at Elm Springs, in the Chickasaw Country. We would drive cattle through the Territory to Abilene, Kansas, which was the nearest railroad shipping center.

A few years later I went among the Osages and worked for them. I built houses and did any other work that they would want done. I learned to speak the Osage language and finally spoke it so well that Chief Nihak-Washe-Tunkah wanted me to stay and be interpreter to the cattlemen who wanted to lease the land for pasture.

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The cattlemen only offered one cent an acre for the land. They even tried to bribe the chief and myself if we would sanction the leases for one cent an acre. We refused and held out for the Indians until the cattlemen were forced to pay the tribe three cents an acre.

My wife came to the Osage country as a Catholic Missionary and we were married about 1886.

We then went to the Chickasaw country and stayed till almost time for the opening of the Cherokee Strip. Then we lived in Stillwater till time for the opening. I made the run and stopped on the place where the Pawnee cemetery is located.

I stayed there awhile then decided to go on and located on this claim, which is just across the river south of the Osage country. The Osages claimed all the country south of the Arkansas River to the Red Hills north of Guthrie. We first lived in a tent until I could build a sod house. We lived in that for about a year. In the spring after the run I began gathering limestone rocks, made a kiln and burned the rock for

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lime. I gathered sandstone and built two rooms of this house, later adding on the rest.

When the Strip opened there were lots of antelope and buffalo. The Osages often came across the river to hunt on this place. They were always pleased when any of the ones I had previously known found where I lived, and often came back to see me. I have a buffalo rug made from a buffalo cow killed on this place. The Indians tanned it and gave it to us. They have also given us deer antlers from deer they have killed here.

Chief Nakah-Washe-Tun'ah was always sending for me to come over there and interpret for him. He always called me "little brother" and I would stay there sometimes for weeks at a time. He knew I wanted to help the Osages and that he could trust me not to take a bribe. I did nearly all of the interpreting for them when the oil companies started leasing the Osage land for oil. Sometimes my life was in danger because I would not sell out to some who were trying to beat the Indians out of their money but I always tried to be honest with them. The older ones used to come to

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my home often but most of the younger ones have forgotten me. The old chief died in 1923 and since then I haven't been over there much.

The Indians gave us many presents. We did have a lot of bundles from their religious societies, many of which contained scalps which they had obtained in their wars, but we sold all the bundles as well as a number of other relics to a German artist from New York. Those pictures of Indians on the wall are copies of pictures painted by this artist who sent them to us.

We have one scalp left, also a shield, a tomahawk and a few other relics which they have given us.

We have a little alligator bag which an Osage woman gave us. She got it when she was a little girl from a tepee as she was preparing to flee while the battle of the Washita was raging.

My wife and daughters used to sew for the Indians. In fact, our daughters earned enough money to pay their expenses through high school and college by crocheting, embroidering and sewing for them.

Did you ever hear of the Sun Dance? Well, I took

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part in one once when I was young. I guess the scars are about gone now. When I first came to this claim there was a pole sitting up in a place down by the creek which had been used by the Indians, I dug it out myself. In the dance a pole is put in the ground like a May pole. A rope is tied to the pole and the braves wishing to take part in it to show their courage, endurance and bravery have a sinew slashed loose either on the back or chest and the rope tied through it. The rope is tied so that the brave can just touch the ground with his toes. He dances around the pole looking at the sun until he faints, then he is cut down. The dance always began at sunrise and lasted as long as the endurance of the brave. The Indians were very superstitious. They would never hold their dances unless everything was just right. It had to be a certain time of the moon, certain seasons, and weather conditions before such dances were held. Two dances were seldom held in the same place.

Did you ever hear of Old John Stink? I first knew him right after his supposed death. He had had scrofula for a long time and the odor from this was so strong

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that he began to be called John Stink. He finally grew worse and died or was pronounced dead by his family. He was buried in true Osage fashion about two miles south of Fairfax where the tribe was camped at that time. The way the Osages buried at that time was to place the body in a sitting position, place rocks around it and over it to hold it in position and protect it from animals. In three or four days John Stink revived, for he had evidently only been unconscious and came back to camp but his family refused to recognize him. They had already confiscated his large number of ponies and at the time it was thought that this might have been partly the reason they would not receive him back. At any rate the whole tribe disowned him and he became an outcast.

At that time I had the Harry Anderson farm leased south of Fairfax and was putting up hay there at the time. John Stink took refuge in Panther cave, on the same place. This was not a cave but merely a ledge of rock jutting out from the side of a hill. Here he slept, foraging for his food. He would come to my

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house begging for food and I would divide with him. If I didn't happen to be at the house he would help himself. He got his meat by killing beeves from the Government herd. He is still living near Pawhuska as a Government ward but has never been recognized by the tribe since his supposed death.