

HALLEM, C. L. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

10018

306

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

HALLEN, C. L. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

10018.

Field Worker's name Ophelia D. Vestal

This report made on (date) February 21, 1938

1. Name Mrs. C. L. Hallen

2. Post Office Address Lawton, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 1109 "C" Ave.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 8 Year 1881

5. Place of birth Nebraska.

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 4.

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Ophelia D. Vestal,
Investigator.
February 21, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. C. L. Hallem
Lawton, Oklahoma.
Born May 8, 1881.

I was born in Nebraska, May 8, 1881, and lived there until I was ten years old. Then my family moved to the Cheyenne Country near Okarche, staying there two years, then we moved to the Cherokee Strip at the opening.

During the time that we lived in Northern Oklahoma, we met with many hardships. About the worst thing was the four years of drouth we lived through. It seems to me the people who came here for the opening were better prepared for the conditions than those pioneering in the Cherokee Strip.

This was a rough country to live in but they were good days. I think there were eighty saloons here in Lawton at the time of the opening. My husband was the first man to pay \$5.00 to the Anti-Saloon League here.

Indians wore calico material wrapped around them. Behind their backs a great number of dogs always followed.

HALLEM, C. L. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

10018.

- 2 -

My husband ran a lumber yard here in the early day and many times I have known him to go to the lumber yard in the night time and nail boards together making a coffin for an Indian. In the opening of the Kiowa-Comanche lands in August 1901, twelve miles southeast of Lawton, we drew a farm. I lived on the farm with my two little girls, for two years, Mr. Hallem coming home for Sundays.

There were no bridges out our direction and when Cache Creek was up and we just had to come into town, we couldn't cross at the "Nine mile crossing" but had to go to the "Four mile crossing." I have seen the water a mile wide in Cache Creek bottom. Many times I have driven into town in the buggy when the water would come up to the seat of the buggy. Now I realize the chances I was taking and wouldn't do anything like that.

Once while we were waiting to cross the creek a man drove out into the water with a load of feed. The water was so swift and was deeper than he thought and it washed everything down stream. The man had to jump for his life and had it not been for my husband and another man the

HALLEM, C. L. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

10018.

- 3 -

team would have drowned. The team lodged near a tree held there by their harness. My husband and the other man were good swimmers. They went to the tree, and cut the harness off the horses with their pocket knives, reaching down from the tree limbs. When the creek was up pretty high, persons could cross on a foot log.

My mother was born in Norway. When she was eighteen she started to America. The vessel she came over on was condemned when they arrived. The captain of the ship was a hard hearted man. As the passengers had to furnish their own food while on board, it took them so long to get to this country, their supply of food was exhausted. There was food on the ship in case they should need it but the captain wouldn't let them have much. The passengers grew angry when this happened and they tied the captain with a rope for a while just to torment him. This made him angry, and instead of landing the boat at New York, he took them on to Quebec, Canada. Finally my mother came to Chicago in 1871 the time of the big fire there.

HALLEM, C. L. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

10018.

- 4 -

The house I was born in was a sod house. In those pioneering days in Nebraska people went through many times of discouragement. In Kansas people had to burn sunflower stalks and twisted hay. They drove ox teams. Had many prairie fires.

If it had not been for the wind changing during a big prairie fire here, in the opening days, the town of Lawton would have burned. The fire started near the mountains northwest of town and drifted because of a change of the wind, around the town, then reached a place near our farm southeast twelve miles from town. If it had not been for eighty acres of new dry plowed land north of our farm house and buildings, our things would have been burned. Many people had to kill some of their live stock. Some few people lost their lives. People saw the fire coming and tore down sheds, pig pens and fences and many took their live stock on to safe grounds. A few families were scattered but soon returned home after the fires.