

McMULLEN, ARNOLD.

INTERVIEW

13176.

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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian Pioneer Hist. subject for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Grace Kelley.

This report made on (date) March 11, 1938.

1. Name Arnold McMullen.

2. Post Office Address 803 West Trudgeon.

3. Residence address (or location) Henrvetta, Oklahoma.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 22 Year 1878.

5. Place of birth Missouri.

6. Name of Father John Amos McMullen. Place of birth Peoria, Illinois.  
Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Sally Campbell. Place of birth Missouri.  
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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Grace Kelley,  
Investigator,  
March 11, 1938.

An Interview With Arnold McMullen,  
Henryetta, Oklahoma.

In 1902 I came to Eufaula on the Katy Railroad. From there I went to Hanna in a wagon. The Frume and Branbrick Construction Company of St. Louis, Missouri, had the grading contract from the Fort Smith and Western Railroad. I went to work building bridges and culverts for them. Their stretch of road was from the South Canadian River at Hanna through Spokogee and to Weleetka on the North Canadian River. The Fort Smith and Western Railroad was being built from Fort Smith to Guthrie and was to cross the Frisco at the end of our work; another contractor started where our work ended and went on west. Weleetka started in February in 1902 so it was being built at the same time that we were building the railroad.

Our construction camp was a regular tent town. There were about fourteen tents for us to live in, a dining tent and cook's tent besides the tents for the horses and mules. One tent was large enough for a hundred and eighty mules and was used in the place of a barn.

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There were twenty-seven men under my charge as I was foreman of the culvert gang but there were about three hundred men with the grading foreman. There were wood choppers, stump shooters, loaders, graders and there was one man to every team, tie hackers, stone masons, civil engineers. There were all types and classes. All of our folks were white but were of all nationalities, mostly Irish, Some of them were refined and others were tough, that is drinkers and wastrels.

The box culverts were made of stone that was hauled from the mountains. They were made before the grading was done. After they were made the grading crew covered them with dirt and filled between them and the level ground. Then the rail crew followed as fast as they could because as soon as the railroad got to a town its profit started.

We were a happy bunch when they got the bridge finished across the South Canadian River because our mail could be brought to Hasson which was later named Hanna. We had had to go to Garner before that for our mail. Hasson or Hanna was on the north side of the river at the bridge of the South Canadian River on Barney Beaver's land. He

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was a full blood Creek Indian. The railroaders called the town Senco because they went there to drink the Senco Meed Beer.

There was a slate crossing on the South Canadian River at Garner. We crossed on our ponies when we went for our mail. It was right at the railroad.

I had been reared in town so I got tired of working on the railroad and there was quite a bit of stone work in Henryetta so I went to Henryetta. I went to work on the first stone school. It was four rooms, two of them were upstairs and two down. It was a subscription school and Miss Lou Curtis was the first teacher. There were three other stone buildings being put up at the same time. One was the Henryetta State Bank Building, one was where the Perry Building is now on the south side of Main at 5th Street. The post office was located in it and it later burned down and was rebuilt of brick, and another store was on the south side of Main at 4th Street. All this stone was from the hill just north of town. Henryetta always had plenty of stone for building purposes and still has.

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Belle Rush was a Cherokee Indian and the wife of my great uncle, Ben Rush. Their son, Willie, lives at Wagoner now. Aunt Belle ran through with everything she had and died in a little three room house. \*

There was a log cabin about three hundred yards west of the Whitehead No. 2 mines in 1903 or 1904. Mr. Merrill lived there and sold whiskey. The United States Marshals knew that the whiskey was being brought to Mr. Merrill in wagons from Stroud and Maud and they wanted to catch the ones who brought it to him. Grant Cowen was the United States Marshal and I believe Perry Pound was the one who helped him. The capture was made just southwest of a round hill just southwest of Henryetta. The whiskey had been concealed under a load of corn. In those days three shots meant that a load of whiskey had come and all drinking men understood it.

\* Note: Aunt Belle Rush was a prominent citizen of Muskogee, Oklahoma, where she kept a popular boarding house for a number of years. Her death occurred in Muskogee. Editor.