

HAMILTON, JIM

INTERVIEW

10625

427

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

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Field Worker's name Olara A. Richard

This report made on (date) April 25 1938

1. Name Jim Hamilton

2. Post Office Address Tonkawa, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 8 mi West of Tonkawa

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 10 Year 1864

5. Place of birth Iowa

6. Name of Father J. M. Hamilton Place of birth Kentucky

Other information about father He was a Dunkard preacher

7. Name of Mother Makale Cassady Place of birth Tennessee

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 _____.

HAMILTON, JIM

INTERVIEW

10625

Clara A. Richard,
Investigator,
April 25, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. Jim Hamilton,
Tonkawa, Oklahoma.

Jim Hamilton came to Kansas in 1878. Then at the age of seventeen he began punching cattle in the Cherokee Outlet. The first ranch on which he worked was owned by a man of the name of Stunkle. The ranch was known as the Dutch 2 (note the S made backward thus 2) and was located four miles south and eighteen miles west of Caldwell, Kansas, at the head of Pond Creek. This was in the summer of 1881.

Jim Hamilton came from Colorado with a horse and cart for the opening, knowing about the time the Strip would be open for settlement. He previously had been a cowboy in the Cherokee Outlet. Looking for a home of his own in this promised land, he came to Andale, Kansas, and stayed for a few days with a sister; from there he went to Caldwell, Kansas, to register. Then for three days he camped at Honeywell, waiting and ready for the big day.

He said the United States Soldiers were kept busy pushing the huge crowds back across the line. There was so much

HAMILTON, JIM

INTERVIEW

10625

- 2 -

noise and shouting that he did not hear the gun that told the eager folk when to start but saw the crowd going wild, and he gave a yell, "There they go!" So, he, on his old race horse, weaving around wagons, carts, buggies and even many on foot, started south into the new country.

The prairie had been burned and the burned grass and dust came up in clouds in the nostrils of man and beast. Two of his nephews and a dozen folk he knew from Andale, started when he did. By their watch the time was two minutes until twelve. About twenty-four miles south of the line he settled on land he thought would make a fine home. He figured he made that run in an hour and a half. On his way down, he was head of his crowd but about sixteen miles out near Deer Creek, he saw dozens of men on horseback coming out of groves of trees and from the banks of the Creek where they had hidden, unknown to the soldiers- the day or two before, and started their run for this free land. Fortunately he had not lost his spade that had been tied to his saddle. He dug a little dugout for his "home" and later dug a well in the Creek that cut across his land and sank a cracker box. He was on his land about two weeks before he had any kind of dispute over the land. One

HAMILTON, JIM

INTERVIEW

10625

- 3 -

Morning he found an old man and two sons in a covered wagon. Several days before he had returned to Andale and brought back his cart and supplies. This particular morning he was returning to his land from the home of a new neighbor, whom he had been helping, and came across these squatters. He was so angry he didn't know what to say or do for a moment. Finally he roared, "What are you fellows doing here?" "Well, we took this land" was the reply. "_____ yes, you did!" and he made a dive to his cart and reached under the cushion for his six shooter and brought it out pointing at them. "Now you - people get". "I'll fix you!" yelled the old man's son. "You didn't have any improvements", the old man said. "Well I don't need your help, I got my improvements all right, all right!- and you better not get out of that wagon or you won't live long!" he cried. The old man said, "All right we will go, I don't want any trouble". They left.

He filed up at Perry the 28th of October, 1893. The men were notified when their turn came by a paper which they had to buy, or borrow if possible.

HAMILTON, JIM

INTERVIEW

10625

- 4 -

There were companies of ten formed and that whole company when notified registered if they remained. Only six stuck it out in his company. All groups were numbered. Three days after the Strip opened, companies were formed. It cost \$14.00 to file on a homestead. From his land to Caldwell, he went back and forth for provisions. When helping his neighbor, he would receive potatoes, onions, etc. for his labor. Money, in 1893, was an unusual sight to see, many will remember.

Four years later he married Alice Rupe, a neighbor. Later sold his homestead for \$2,400, and bought land two miles south. From here they moved into the new town of Tonkawa and purchased the C. S. Reed Livery Stable, naming it the Star Livery barn (though gone years ago).

An incident occurred in Jim Hamilton's cowboy days, while he was still working on the Dutch Ranch. In trying to get done, the foreman, Finley Warnberger, ^{home} who had imbibed too freely of Caldwell liquor, and who had become hilarious, Jim and his pals decided to get Warnberger out of town before Marshal Brown threw him in jail. Just as they had

HAMILTON, JIM

INTERVIEW

10625

- 6 -

the spring and fall.

In the year of 1883 Jim Hamilton said that he wrangled horses for Frank Garrison who owned a 3,000 acre ranch near where the town of Enid, Oklahoma, now stands. Frank Garrison, beside having a large herd of horses, had 5,500 head of cattle.

A trail called the Lane, running from Kansas to old Oklahoma, passed through where Enid, Oklahoma, now is. The ranchmen leased these acres from the Government for 1 cent per acre- this money went to the support of the Indian.

Later in the year of 1889, Mr. Hamilton cooked for the cowhands during the roundup as he was crippled and could not ride a horse. This was called the Central Roundup. This territory not being under fence, the cowboys drove the truck wagons to form a triangle- then roped across two sides driving the stock into the V shaped corral thus closing this make shift corral with the third rope. Some of the cowboys would surround this enclosure on their horses in order to rope any animals that might try to make a get away.