

HAMLIN, JAMES E. INTERVIEW.

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

HAMLIN, JAMES E. - INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker's name Robert W. Small

This report made on (date) March 21, 1938

1. Name James E. Hamlin

2. Post Office Address Newkirk, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Same

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 19 Year 1877

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father D. M. Hamlin Place of birth Illinois

7. Name of Mother Ann Chambers Hamlin Place of birth Illinois

Other information about ~~mother~~ father - He was

Assistant State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

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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Small, Robert W.-Investigator.
Indian Pioneer History-S-149.
March 21, 1938.

Interview with James E. Hamlin
Newkirk, Oklahoma

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I was born November 19th, 1877, in the state of Illinois. In my youth, my father, D. M. Hamlin, was a teacher in the schools of Sangamon County, Illinois. Later, he served as Assistant Superintendent of State Schools. In 1890, he moved to Kansas, and in September 1893, when the Cherokee Strip was opened he made the Run on horseback from the line west of Arkansas City, Kansas, in which race he secured a claim but he sold his relinquishment in a short time and came to Newkirk.

On the day of the Opening my mother, accompanied by me, made the run for a townlot in the townsite that was to become the county seat of Kay County. My mother was a small woman, but active and full of energy. We managed to get aboard the first train that left Arkansas City bound for the cattle loading switch called Kirk. I carried a quilt in my arms and the train was loaded with every person that could possibly hang on to any part of the train. When we arrived at the switch called Kirk everybody got off

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but the train crew. My mother walked around a little amongst the multitude numbered in the thousands and since she could see no stakes indicating a townsite that was supposed to be platted and staked off into lots, she made inquiry from someone as to where the lots were situated or how they could be found. A man told her that she would have to select a spot where she could get a space 50 x 150 feet that had no person on it and then drive a stake on it with her name written on it or stay on it herself and that the townsite would be surveyed and platted later. My mother found a vacant spot and stepped off a space determined to be about 50 x 150 feet, and placed a stake on same, and I spread my quilt on it and we were at home. Mother soon learned that many people were leaving and going somewhere in great numbers, She made inquiry about their leaving and was told that the townsite was about a mile and one half south, so my mother said to me that I could stay there and she would go to the other townsite and see what was going on, and that if she did not return by near sundown for me to follow up. It was a mile and a half for mother to walk but she soon stepped it off and found a real townsite all platted and staked off and a multitude of people assembled thereon, but

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she found a vacant lot on Fourth and Walnut Streets, and she located there. About half an hour before sundown I decided mother must have found another townsite, so I picked up my quilt and set out for the other townsite, but before I left most everyone had deserted the supposed townsite at Kirk. I was not long in getting to the other townsite but when I got there, I never saw such a multitude of people and I could see my mother nowhere. I made some inquiry from different ones if they had seen a lady dressed in a certain grey colored suit of a make not commonly worn by women of this country, and I soon got her located by her odd style of dress and we spread the quilt on a new lot, and that night we were told we might spread our quilt under a tent nearby, which we did and next day we returned to our home in Kansas which we reached late in the evening, after walking the last five miles from a railroad station to our home.

Father came to the townsite before we left but he could not find us. The next day he came home also. Then we began to plan to put up some kind of a building on the lot. We bought a little shack up in Kansas, that had been used by a photographer, which we took down in sections and

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moved to the lot where we rebuilt it.

We moved to the new town which at first was called Lamreaux, but the people did not like the name and they voted or decided to call it Santa Fe, but the Government did not like that name for a postoffice, so the name of Newkirk was finally agreed upon.

Father put out his shingle as a Pension Attorney and Notary Public, and was the first Justice of Peace in the new town. He died in 1897.

I worked a short time in a restaurant, and then worked a few months as jockey, training horses for the Oklahoma Circuit. In 1894, I entered the employ of the Newkirk Democrat as a devil. My older brother, D. M. Jr. had been in their employ since the paper was established right after the Opening. Buck & Harter were the publishers, being the first in Kay County to publish a paper.

My brother and I continued to work for different plants of the city until 1898, when I enlisted in Co. L. First Territorial ^{Volunteer} Infantry and was later transferred to First Territorial band as snare drummer and served until my discharge at Albany, Georgia, in February, 1899, when I returned to my home at Newkirk. At this time there were four papers

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being published in Newkirk. A little later two of them were consolidated. My brother, D. M. Jr. and I bought a printing press and established another newspaper in the town, and on June 7, 1899, we put out the first issue of the Newkirk Herald. In 1900, we purchased the Newkirk Democrat and consolidated our papers under the name of the Democrat-Herald, which we continued to publish until 1916 when we established a daily paper under the name of Daily Reporter which we have continued to publish until the present time. The Herald-Journal we have continued to publish as a weekly since we took over the News-Journal some years ago. My brother and I have been closely associated in the newspaper business with the exception of the time he served as postmaster under President Wilson's administration.

Our first plant was bought on the installment plan, paying it out at \$25. per month. In 1901, we built a good six-room house on our mother's lot that she secured at the Opening, in which she continues to live at this time, she being 87 years of age and in good health. My mother secured the relinquishment on a lot adjoining hers and filed on it and patents to the two lots were issued by the Government to her.

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The number of people assembled on the townsite on the opening day was estimated to be 10,000; water was sold for 2 to 5 cents per drink by men running water-wagons.

On Sunday, the next day after the Opening, preaching was held by a man from Arkansas City, Kansas.