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BIOGRAPHY FORM.  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Tion or History Project for Oklahoma

HANLEY, L. J.

INTERVIEW

9635

Field Worker's name Linnaeus B. HanckThis report made on (date) January 3 1938

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1. Name Mr. L. J. Hanley,
2. Post Office Address Fargo, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 12 Year 1856
5. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_
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6. Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_
- Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_
7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_
- Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_
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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 7.

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Linnaeus B. Ranck, " "

Investigator,

January 3, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. L. J. Hanley,  
Fargo, Oklahoma.

L. J. Hanley was born at Paris, Illinois, January 12, 1856. In 1882 he came to the Cherokee Nation. He worked at the building trade at various places in the old Indian Territory. He built a \$12,000.00 home for the Creek Chief, Pleasant Porter.

Hanley became "Master Farmer" to the Indians--representing the Government in its effort to improve and expand farming as an industry among the Five Civilized Tribes and in this capacity worked in conjunction with and under the jurisdiction of the Indian Agent. Cotton then was the main crop. The Indian Service was trying to work out a diversified farm program. As a result of his efforts as adviser to the farmers of the Five Tribes, the farmers in the Cherokee country began raising very successfully several grain crops on a commercial scale which resulted in the building of a large mill at Muskogee to convert the abundant crops of wheat and corn raised by the farmers of the Indian Territory into commercial by-products.

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The first spiketooth harrow, the first mower and reaper combined and the first self binder and steel beam plow used in Indian Territory, Mr. Hanley introduced to its farmers after he became farm adviser to the Five Tribes.

The Cherokees, especially the Full bloods were inclined to be prejudiced against white men coming to their country. When Mr. Hanley came to the Nation a Cherokee named Welsh took a dislike to him, although this dislike was unknown to Hanley. To engender general dislike and mis-trust of Hanley among the Cherokees, Welsh fabricated and caused to be circulated the false accusation that Mr. Hanley was in the Cherokee Nation as a spy and detective. This deceptive rumor and misrepresentation of Mr. Hanley spread among the Indians with marvelous rapidity and soon most of the Cherokees began calling him "Little Red Cloud." He did not learn the reason or significance of this till a few years later.

One night Mr. Hanley was returning to Tahlequah from a trip into the country and got lost in trying to follow a path or trail through the dense timber. He got off of his

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home to search for the path he had lost and before working out of his confusion, heard the voices of men not far distant from him. He took occasion to listen cautiously to these men and concluded they had met in secrecy for some purpose. He managed to get close enough to get the purport of their conversation and estimate the number in the group. There were three men in the party and their conversation revealed to him that they were conceiving a plot to burglarize the Cherokee National Treasury the following Tuesday night. Mr. Hanley conveyed this information to the proper authority the next day.

In those days in the Cherokee country the Nation was divided into districts for certain governmental purposes corresponding to our county subdivisions in many respects. Each district had a sheriff who was superior to all the district sheriffs; they called this official "High Sheriff." The High Sheriff came to Mr. Hanley asking him to join with the officials in the attempt they would make to foil the burglars and capture them.

A posse secluded themselves in the Cherokee Capitol the night the plot was to have been executed. Mr. Hanley

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joined them and by special request of the sheriff took a point of vantage with the high sheriff and a district sheriff. The three men lay abreast in prone positions on the floor with Mr. Hanley between the two officers. Hours passed before the burglars came and in the meantime, the High Sheriff stealthily slipped Hanley's Winchester away from him. This move on the part of the officer, Hanley regarded as rather strange. The burglars came and reached the Treasury safe and were preparing to blast it open with dynamite when they were suddenly thwarted and captured.

Not many days after the futile attempt to rob the National Treasury of the Cherokees Mr. Hanley noted that some of the Indians began calling him "Little White Cloud" and he wondered why. In the course of time he happened to be at the home of William P. Ross, then principal chief of the Cherokees. He and Chief Ross sat visiting on the Chief's front porch when a number of other prominent Cherokees including Chief Bushyhead appeared and addressed Hanley as "Little White Cloud." When they departed Mr. Hanley asked Chief Ross in confidence just why the Indians first called him "Little Red Cloud" and then

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quite abruptly began calling him "Little White Cloud." Chief Ross explained to him that he had been under suspicion and had been a mistrusted character to most of the Cherokees and that since red clouds along the horizon in the evening were threats of an approaching storm, a warning that likely bad weather was in the offing--omens of evil as it were-- the name "Little Red Cloud" which the Indians had given Mr. Hanley signified that he should be watched and held under constant surveillance by the Cherokees but that since his faithful part in foiling the attempted looting of the Cherokee Treasury he had been vindicated in the minds of the mistrusting Indians, and that therefore they expressed their confidence in him and their friendship for him by calling him "Little White Cloud" since the white, fleecy cloud was an omen of good to the Indians. The appellation of "Little White Cloud" to Mr. Hanley meant that the stigma of distrust had been removed.

During his days in the Cherokee Nation, the farmers and ~~stock raisers paid no taxes at all; it mattered not whether a~~ man had one cow or one horse or ten thousand head of stock. None of the chattel property of the citizens of the Cherokee Nation was subject to taxation except the stocks of goods

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belonging to merchants: They paid tax to the Cherokee Government at the rate of 25 cents per \$100.00 of invoiced valuation of their stocks of merchandise.

Any citizen of the Cherokee Nation could claim the use of as much land as he wished although in order to maintain exclusive use the citizen was bound to fence the area he wished to use; and in that event his exclusive jurisdiction extended one fourth of a mile beyond his fence in every direction with respect to any other citizen's right to fence adjacent lands.

In case a Cherokee citizen vacated his habitation and the land he had used therewith and remained absent continuously for one year and a day he forfeited all right to further use of that particular piece of land and his title and interest in and to all of the improvements situated thereon, regardless of the value of the improvement and whether the absentee had built the improvement or not, provided that any other citizen wished to claim and actually occupy the vacated home after the fact had been established that it had been abandoned for at least a year and a day.



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This rule and policy caused more or less trouble and litigation in the Cherokee courts. It tended to encourage what might be called "claim jumping."

Of course, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation was privileged to move or vacate at any time and sell all the improvements on the land he had been using and had been in lawful possession of. In case, however, he remained absent for a year and a day, and in the meantime had not sold the improvements on the land he had vacated and the fact could be established, all of his right, title and interest in and to the tenements were automatically forfeited. In case it was observed that a Cherokee citizen had left his home and the land he had been using in connection therewith, as a very general rule the fact, including the exact date the premises had been vacated, was reported to the proper official. This data became of official record and was resorted to in case of contest in the future of the absentee citizen's right to return and resume lawful use and possession of the lands and tenements he had vacated.