

COATNEY, A. C.

INTERVIEW

9893

389

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

COATNEY, A. C.

INTERVIEW.

#9893.

Field Worker's name Linnaeus B. Ranck,

This report made on (date) February 4, 1938

1. Name A. C. Coatney,

2. Post Office Address Gage, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year 1865

5. Place of birth Illinois.

6. Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about father Soldier in Union Army during  
CIVIL WAR.

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 Four.

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Linnaeus B. Ranck,  
Investigator.  
February 4, 1938.

Interview with A. C. Coatney,  
Gage, Oklahoma.

In June, 1893, I was at Vernon, Texas. I bought a saddle pony for \$3.00 and a saddle for \$13.00 and with two companions, carrying camp equipment on their horses, started for Oklahoma Territory. We crossed Red River at Doan's Store. Once in the Indian country we saw nothing but cattle and cowboys till we got up near Lawton and Fort Sill. In that section we came upon numerous Indians and Indian camps. Western Oklahoma that summer was in the grip of an extreme drouth. There was not a green blade of grass anywhere in the western part of the Territory except near streams and springs. There was lots of grass but it was parched and dead and would have readily burned. I was interested in locating in Oklahoma but found the country so parched and dry I decided I would not take a farm as a gift.

My companions and I crossed the South Canadian River not far west of the site of old Ioland. In the Canadian River bottoms we stopped to prepare a lunch and were quite

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surprised to have two stalwart Indian bucks ride up and beg for something to eat. We shared our "grub" with the Indians, who appeared quite friendly but we could not get the bucks to speak but a very few words of English. They begged all the tobacco from us they could get and rode on east down the river.

About where the inland village of Harmon now is we came upon many hundreds of range horses. There must have been two thousand of them and they were large and beautiful horses for those days in the Southwest. (This must have been the range and stock of the old Fitzgerald Horse Ranch.) It was about the headwaters of Little Wolf Creek that we shot a deer. We carved out a choice portion of the animal and carried it on with us for food. Not many miles farther north we observed a number of saddle horses along the creek not far ahead of us. Suspicious of what we might be running into we quickly threw the hind quarter of venison into a plum thicket and proceeded forward. We discovered the saddle horses belonged to two cowboys and three cavalry

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troopers who were gathered under a hackberry tree playing cards.

Up on Beaver Creek we found a couple of settlers, one James and the other named Gray, who seemed to be operating small ranches. These settlers on Beaver Creek advised us that we were not far from the north boundary of the Strip so we turned back and headed for El Reno. We went back through Fort Supply, thence on to Woodward where we stayed over night. At Woodward then there was a land office, a saloon and a small store. When we reached Woodward one of my companions went to the saloon and got gloriously drunk for the night. The next morning he was scarcely sober enough to depart with me and the other man. At Woodward we replenished our food supplies but the man who had celebrated all night left without making this provision for the remainder of the trip before us. We stopped for dinner in the persimmon flats southeast of Woodward. Here we found less evidence of extreme drouth. Being out of patience with the man who left Woodward without providing more eats for himself we refused to share our

dinner with him. He became enraged and kicked everything we were preparing over a fire hither, thither, there and yonder. We lashed him out of camp then and he rode on alone. Some miles farther on our journey we overtook him begging at a settler's house for something to eat. My companion and I went on to El Reno. When we arrived there I sold my saddle for \$3.00 and gave my pony to the Indians for I could not sell it at any price. I took the train from El Reno for Illinois. It appeared to me there were "thousands" of Indians camped about El Reno and the Darlington Agency that summer.

In 1898 I came back to El Reno and worked on the building being constructed there at that time. Teddy Roosevelt and his Rough Riders were at Fort Reno in training for service in the Spanish-American War. There were a thousand men in Roosevelt's command at Fort Reno.

In 1903 I homesteaded in the northwestern part of what is now Ellis County.