

HANKINS, A. S.

INTERVIEW

4907

160

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for OklahomaField Worker's name Herbert RogersThis report made on (date) July 31 1937Name A. S. Hankins6. Post Office Address AlvaResidence address (or location) 719 Church StreetDATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 3 Year 1848Place of birth Macomb, IllinoisName of Father Andrew Jackson Hankins Place of birth Kentucky

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Lydia Pennington Place of birth Illinois

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and history 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 _____.

INTERVIEW WITH A. S. HANKINS
Alva, Oklahoma
Herbert Rogers, Interviewer

Mr. Hankins was born in Macomb, Illinois, on March 8, 1848. Most of his life he has lived in Barber County, Kansas, and Woods County, Oklahoma.

At the time of the opening of the Strip he was running a hotel in Kiowa. He was just doing this until the Strip was opened up for settlement. Mr. Hankins was living in this hotel when he was taking care of a sick man. This man was getting better and told Mr. Hankins that if he had a bottle of beer he would feel better. Mr. Hankins went down to the saloon that stayed open all night. It was almost daylight. He bought the beer and didn't have the change, but offered a five dollar bill. The keeper did not have the change so told him to stop by some other time and pay for the beer. Two men had been running this saloon; they had just dissolved partnership and both were collecting the bills. Mr. Hankins paid one of them for the beer and then the other one came around and asked Mr. Hankins for the money for the beer, while he was in the drug store. Mr. Hankins told him he had paid his partner and the man called him a liar. Mr.

2

Hankins was young and strong then and he did not have to take anything that he didn't want to so he started toward this man. The man pulled out a hundred dollar bill and bet Mr. Hankins that he could whip him if they would both go to the back yard. Mr. Hankins took him up and the drug store man held the money. They started out but the fight didn't come off for the man backed out. That night while Mr. Hankins was serving meals to about fort or fifty people he heard somebody say "I'm going to kill you." He knew the voice and he looked up and a bullet whizzed by almost hitting him. He rushed to the man and knocked him down breaking his own knuckle. Men in those days walked along with their hands in their coat pockets and when they had trouble they could use a gun from their pocket. Mr. Hankins told this man who had shot at him that when he passed him to take his hands out of his pockets and this man always did every-time he passed Mr. Hankins.

Another experience was when Mr. Hankins and another man were going along in their horse-drawn cart and here came four men rushing as fast as they could on four horses and stopped and asked then if they had seen any people go either way and they replied that they hadn't. Mr. Hankins found

3

that the Bank at Medicine Lodge had been robbed and these men were looking for the robbers. It was thought that these four men were going to hold up Mr. Hankins and his friend. Later the robbers were found out west of town.

Several men left money with their landlords to keep for them. Mr. Hankins kept money for people also. One man left thirty-five dollars with him and told him to be sure and not let him have it until the next day. Mr. Hankins did not keep money lying around so he took the money to the bank. That night the man came back and wanted his money. He kept on and finally asked for five dollars. Mr. Hankins only had two dollars at home so he gave him that. That man never did come back after the rest of his money and Mr. Hankins has always wondered what became of him. Several other people left money with him and never did come after it. Those were wild and wooly days when people were shot and buried and nothing would ever be said about it. Mr. Hankins knows where there is a place now where several people were buried by individuals who shot them. They were buried so it wouldn't be known that they had been shot.

Finally, when the Strip opened Mr. Hankins rode down in a two wheeled cart. He came to a deep bank and he

HANKINS, A. S.

INTERVIEW

4907

4

didn't know how he would get across. He thought that his race was over. Then he found a little place where cattle crossed. There was just room enough for a horse to cross. He tried getting across. In going over his cart overturned and he lost all the horses' feed and lost his own grub. This did not stop him for he got right up and turned the cart back up and started right. He made his claim three miles northwest of Alva.

When the line was made for the people to stand behind, Mr. Hankins said that he couldn't see the end of the line either way. There were several thousand people there to run. One woman just stepped across and put down her stake. Some man did the same, but the woman got the land. Mr. Hankins saw the woman drive her stake.

Mr. Hankins has lived here in Woods County for a long time and is nearing ninety years old. He is a great-great-grandfather.