

INDEX CARDS

Pioneer Life--Cherokee Strip
Pawnee
Outlaws--Starr, Belle
Pawnees
Dances--Pawnee
Music--Pawnee
Schools--Pawnee
Water--Oklahoma Territory
Social Gatherings--Oklahoma Territory

INTERVIEW with Mrs. Sadie Hughes
By Goldie Turner, Field Worker,
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Mr. Grant Foreman,
Director S-149.

Born in Illinois in 1863. Moved to Kansas when a child. Came to Oklahoma in September 1893.

My brother-in-law, Charles Freamer who was a merchant, made the run to Pawnee when the strip opened in 1893 and preempted a farm containing 160 acres which adjoined Pawnee on the southwest. He built a small frame house and went back to Stillwater to get his family. They had been moved only three weeks when my sister died leaving three small children, one an infant. My husband and I took them back to Kansas with us. We had been back there only a short time when my husband wanted to come back to Pawnee to live. I consented and in the fall of 1894 with my three small children and my sister's three children we made the trip in a covered wagon. We moved into the house my brother-in-law had built.

All the land south of us was covered with trees and there was only one trail going around the steep hill to the east of us. The children often begged me to take them for a walk around the hill. One evening, leaving the baby asleep I started out with them. We had gone perhaps a hundred yards when on turning around I saw a large Indian man going toward our house. I was always very afraid of the Indians as were the

2

children. I called to the children and we turned and ran as fast as we could back to the house. We reached the door of the house just as the Indian went around the corner back of the house. He did not stop however but disappeared in the trees. I told my husband about it when he came home and that I was afraid our baby might have been stolen but he only laughed at me and said the Indians had all the babies they wanted without any white ones.

My husband bought seven acres from my brother-in-law and built our present home. It was the largest dwelling in the town at that time (it is a two-story stone building).

One evening the children and I were at home alone I went into the kitchen to get a drink and saw at the window an Indian man peering in. I was very frightened but went quietly out closed the door and hurriedly locked all the doors. He did not try, however to get into the house and the children were not disturbed.

At another time a rather hard looking lady drove up in a light spring wagon tied the horses and came to the door. She demanded that I give her some meat, saying that she had a sick husband and that she knew I had meat in the cellar. I gave her some and was later told that she was Belle Starr, a member of an outlaw gang.

3

The first New Year's Eve we were here we heard a lot of noise and yelling. On looking out we saw a band of Indians horseback close to the house. We locked all the doors but they went on by yelling and making all the noise they could. The closest people what would now be two blocks away in a little tent. They later told me that they were watching and if the Indians had started to harm us they would have come to help us.

The main amusements of early days were concerts and Indian dances. We would never miss either. The concerts were given either at the agency in the open air or at the hall here in town. It was composed of young Indian men who sang. They were tutored by the white teachers at the agency. Whenever we heard the tom toms we would start out for we knew there was to be an Indian dance. They were held in different places and we have gone as far as fifteen miles in our buggy over prairie trails to watch them. The dances often lasted two or three days and the Indians danced to the tom toms and gourds till they dropped. They got so they would tell the white people to go home. The different bands of Indians would camp together and the dances would be held either in mud lodges or a large clearing would be made by chopping down the trees and the dances held in the open.

4

Mr. Hughes started a little short order in 1895 and a few years later set up a bakery and confectionery which he run for fifteen years. He also started the first picture show in Pawnee and ran both the bakery and show until his death in 1913.

When we first came to Pawnee water was obtained from springs, about a mile south of town. A man had a tank wagon and hauled water for the town. It cost 10¢ a bucket or 25¢ a barrel. He did not always get around once a day so a good supply had to be bought each day. In the summer time the water got so warm we could hardly drink it. Sometimes in the evening we would walk out to a little spring about a quarter of a mile away and bring back a bucket of water. The children who would be in bed when we returned would be awakened and given a cool drink. Mr. Hughes finally dug a well in our back yard. At first there was no water in it and he wanted to fill it up but I didn't want him to so he covered it and left it. The next spring we found it was nearly full of water so Mr. Hughes had the water baled out and walled it up with rock and put a pump in. It has furnished us with water since then and I prefer it to the city water which is now piped into the house.

When my two daughters were about twelve and fifteen our house became the gathering place for the young folks. They

5

would spend the evenings making pop corn balls, taffy and in helping me to cut, sew, and roll carpet rags to be made into rugs for the floor. Whenever they heard that I had the rugs taken up for cleaning they would gather in for a dance. The hand loomed carpets covered the entire floor and were tacked down at the edges so were not taken up very often for cleaning.