

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

Field Worker's name Grace Kelley.

This report made on (date) August 17, 1937

1. Name M. C. Hickman.
2. Post Office Address Henryetta, Route 1, box 84 B
3. Residence address (or location) Five miles west of Henryetta, one-fourth EA
of county line.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1862
5. Place of birth Buchanan County, N. W. Missouri.

6. Name of Father William Hickman Place of birth Kentucky.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Rovina Clinkenbeard 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 9.

Grace Kelley,
Interviewer.

Moving to Our Claims, 1891.
by
M.C. Hickman, Henryetta, Rt. 1.

Two of my brothers got claims in Lincoln County in the Run. Then they went back to Kansas after their families, father and me. We entered the Indian Territory near the Chilocco Mission. There was a ford near Perry on the Black Bear River. From there we went to Guthrie, which was quite a town.

Times were hard and money was scarce so one of my brothers stayed on his claim, which was a farm, for six months, sold it and went back to Kansas. He was disgusted with trying to get a farm for nothing. I got a job working for one of the neighbors a half mile away for fifteen dollars a month, which was good wages.

The other brother built a sixteen by sixteen foot house or room of logs. It had one glass window, a door, and a fireplace. Part of the furniture was brought ^{with us} and the rest shipped to Guthrie and hauled out from there.

When I was working for the neighbor my father and brother built a camp fire. They had a yoke of oxen so my brother told father that he was going to hunt the cattle, and that if he went away to put the fire out first. Well, he forgot to put it out and went to the other brother's claim. The fire

-2-

got in the grass, burned both wagons, house and everything. He came over to see me and said he guessed he would have to sell out, it would have been hard enough without the fire but now he knew he couldn't stay on the claim. I told him that I was making fifteen dollars a month and would help out all I could if he would stay. He stayed on the claim and I helped him for two years.

Cherokee Strip Opening

I was there but I didn't make the "Run". I took a load of corn to sell and was on the line when the gun was fired. Some people had sticks in their hands and when the gun was fired they didn't run, they just reached over and stuck the stick in the ground. I guess there were five hundred where I was but there were others in different places along the line. Some had ox teams, hacks, or wagons, and some were horseback and some on foot. A lot of them were running to Perry for they wanted to be in town. I got within a mile of it when there was a big jam of wagons - there were no cars in that jam. A bridge was down or something held them up and it was next morning before they got to Perry. The town had tent houses, stores and saloons. I paid five cents for a cup of bad water to drink. People started to digging water wells as soon as they got there.

-3-

as that was an improvement, too. There were no fights that I know about but sometimes a person would put a stake on one corner of a claim and someone would put his stake on another corner of the same claim. They would have to go to court and prove who put their stake down first.

Cotton gin. Grist mill. Saw mill.

In that same year, 1898, I came to this part of the country and went to work for Albert Furr until he got killed four years later. He was a rancher and shipped his cattle both ways to and from Checotah. It was our biggest Cow Town. Furr also had a cotton gin, grist mill, and saw mill between the Creek and Victoria coal mines. Both mines have been discontinued and torn down but the dumps are still there. Furr's wife's allotment is one mile due south of the Creek lines and there were eight allotments adjoining which belonged to the same family. He was white. They were related to Hugh Henry.

Hugh Henry used to tell me that he was born in the Territory but when his mother died leaving him and Pat, his father took him and his brother to his grandmother in Texas, then when he was grown he returned to the Territory.

First Wire Fence was Parkeson's.

It was either in 1889 or 1890 that the same Parkesons at Okmulgee fenced this whole country. They put up a four wire fence south of here to the Old Oklahoma line. I don't remember hearing exactly how the fences ran for it was before I came here, but I know it is so. The Parkesons wanted to rent to the Texas cattlemen. Isparhechar had his Indians to cut all the posts down, that turned lots of cattle loose in here on the range. The wire belonged to Parkeson but he hadn't bought the posts from the Creeks so they still belonged to them, so by cutting the posts they were cutting their own property. He brought a two thousand dollar suit against the Territory, but he got nothing for the Indians hadn't bothered his property. Isparhechar then made an agreement with the Texas cattlemen to pay the Indians so much a year for pasturage and his Light Horsemen collected it.

Green Peach War. 1882.

As told to M. C. Hickman, by Wm. Sullivan.

William Sullivan was my wife's uncle and I lived with him for several years.

The Green Peach War, or as he called it, the Isparhechar War was similar to the Civil War. Chechtah was Chief and

-5-

Isparhechar didn't agree with him so they began fighting. They went toward Old Oklahoma about the Sac and Fox country and coming back they had a battle on Rock Creek, two miles south of the Old McDermott store, that would be four miles southwest of Okemah now. William Sullivan and Little Fish were both in that battle; they are both dead now. Several were killed but Isparhechar won that battle and later was made Chief of the Creeks.

Osage and Creek War.

The Osages came in here to steal cattle and ponies. Three miles south of Bad Creek they had a battle and the Creeks killed about all of the Osages in that gang. They were going from Okmulgee into the Choctaw Nation to steal.

Osage Hill.

After the battle the Creeks saw a white horse standing on top of a hill one mile east and a little south of the Creek mines. When they went up they found a crippled Osage. They killed him, took the horse and named the hill Osage Hill. Sam Checotah must have been Chief then.

Snake Uprising.

The first or the beginning of the Snake Uprisings was in 1900. Crazy Snake wanted to get his country back. He

-6-

wanted all of it owned by all of the Creeks, not divided and no white people in here at all.

Once a month the Indians held a meeting at the Old Hickory Ground Town.

The Government stopped that uprising and there wasn't any more meetings until 1908.

Crazy Snake made plenty of money out of his scheme. He charged ten dollars a head to join his band of followers. He took whites, negroes, and a few Indians, mostly negroes. There were about five hundred in the camp at Old Hickory Ground Town. They stole some meat from a white man, I can't remember his name. When the Sheriff and his deputy went to search for the meat they weren't allowed to search but were forced to leave.

I lived in this same place and was working in the field when Adam Grayson, negro, came running by and told me they were "killing negroes like killing hogs over there".

I believe there were eleven men in the bunch of white men who went out there; twenty-two were captured and fourteen killed, most of them negroes. But nobody knows exactly how many were killed.

After the fighting was over the militia came in and scoured the country, captured some and made them take the

7

Oath of Allegiance, the same as after the Civil War.

Crazy Snake had told all who joined him that when they got the country back they would be considered citizens of the Creek Nation, regardless of color and have the rights of an Indian.

Cattle Trail

(Mr. Hickman called it the Chisholm.)

Between Okemah and old McDermott the cattle trail is still there, between one and two city blocks wide. It crossed Deep Fork River between Okmulgee and Greyhound's store, which is ten or twelve miles north and east of Okemah.

Mail Routes

Billie Harrison, a Sac and Fox Indian, carried the mail on horseback from Muskogee to the Sac and Fox Agency. I don't believe there were many stops. He crossed Deep Fork at Okmulgee.

There was a mail hack and passengers were hauled between Muskogee and Okmulgee for a fare of two dollars.

Eufaula was the closest railroad town so I suppose the mail route came from there.

The first post office there was McDermott, but when Okemah was built it was discontinued.

The second post office was ten or twelve miles northeast of Okemah, owned by a white man who had an Indian wife. I can't recall his white name. His Indian name meant greyhound (Chebothna). When he sold out and went to Texas the post office was discontinued.

Store and Ford Crossing

Eight miles southwest of Okemah was the Davis Store and ford crossing on the North Canadian River. Mr. Davis was white, but had an Indian wife. This place was called Arbeca Crossing and there was another Arbeca Crossing where the Arbeca bridge is now. I don't know how they kept them separate but I know the one where the bridge is was named after the Arbeca Town, which is close to it.

The Bearden store and crossing was five miles southeast of the Davis store. There is an oil field there now.

Four or five miles, still going the river, there is another crossing, where a Chickasaw Indian had a cotton gin.

9

Three miles farther down the river is the Sand Burr Crossing and there was a store, cotton gin and a sawmill. Two or three white people lived there and Indians lived back from there, but not right at the crossing.