

HOFFMAN, ALVA L. . . INTERVIEW

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

HOFFMAN, ALVA L.

INTERVIEW.

10352.

Field Worker's name Nora Lorrin.

This report made on (date) March 28, 1938. 1938

1. Name Alva L. Hoffman.

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 820 South Mitchell Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 2 Year 1872.

5. Place of birth Illinois.

6. Name of Father Harvey H. Hoffman. Place of birth Illinois,

Hoffman. 1849.
7. Name of Mother Mary Ellen (Whiteside) Place of birth 1855.

Other information about mother Died in 1933.

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 _____.

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Nora L. Lorrin,
Investigator,
March 28, 1938.

Interview With Alva L. Hoffman,
820 South Mitchell Street,
El Reno, Oklahoma.

I was born in Adams County, Illinois, May 2, 1872. I came to Weatherford in 1900. It was the end of the railroad at that time, but they built on out soon after. Weatherford is sixty miles straight west of El Reno.

I went into the railroad business and for a time was clerk for the Choctaw Railroad at Weatherford. I got into the work through an uncle, D. M. Whiteside, who was working under an agent by the name of W. O. Horr. He gave me the clerical job. Being in the railroad business is a rather uncertain business and I never knew how long I would be at any place I was sent to. I was sent from Weatherford to Geary and was there as railroad clerk when I met and married Mattie Musser in 1905.

Geary was a lively little place, having a population of about twelve or fifteen hundred. Freight was hauled to and from there from all directions, and took in an area of about eighty miles in each direction.

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We were sent back to Weatherford for a while, then to Blackwell and then to Fort Worth, Texas. Then in 1908 I was transferred to El Reno as a clerk for the Rock Island Railroad. I kept at this work for about twelve or fourteen years, and during the War, George Purcell was the clerk and cashier here at the freight house and he went to War, and I took his place until his return. I quit the Rock Island and went to work as an agent for the St. Louis, El Reno and Western Railroad, and held that job until the company blew up and sold the track and everything. One can still tell where that railroad used to be by some land marks, but it has been gone quite a long time.

Then I went into the store business. At different times I have run two or three little stores in the Fair Addition of El Reno, and then we moved to 820 South Mitchell. Our store is just next door. I have been at my present address for about fifteen years. Many of our nice buildings that we have now were built since I came here, among them most of the churches, the library, the post office,

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and lots of the pavement. We used to have red brick pavement on some of our streets, better than dirt but still pretty rough. There has been so much improvement in the town since we came here that it does not seem like the same place. The big Central School House was a brand new building, and El Reno was very proud of it. The Elks Home, which had been the Oklahoma building at the St. Louis World's Fair, had just been brought here.

The St. Louis, El Reno and Western Railroad, that I have spoken of, was a line that ran from El Reno to Guthrie. It was sometimes called the Fort Smith and Western Railroad, but that was really not the right name for it. The Fort Smith and Western Railroad is still running.