

INDEX CARDS:

Choctaw Nation
Durant
United States Marshal
Outlaws

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

13339

Field Worker's name Terren D. Morse

This report made on (date) April 19, 1939

1. Name Jim J. Hunter

2. Post Office Address Ryan, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1871

5. Place of birth Denton County, Texas.

6. Name of Father Frank Hunter Place of birth Texas.

Other information about father Died when I was small.

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 15.

Warren D. Morse,
Field Worker
April 19, 1937.

INTERVIEW WITH JIM J. HUNTER
Ryan, Oklahoma

My father died and my mother married again. I left home when I was twenty-two years old, and came to Durant, where I got a job making cross ties at \$8.00 a month and board.

I got acquainted with a United States Deputy, J. B. Davis, and asked him for a job and I was made an assistant under him with headquarters at Durant, the southern District of Choctaw Nation.

We were sent to Woodville, north of Dennison, Texas, to get some men. We used bloodhounds for trailing them. We kept the bloodhounds muzzled when we wanted them to trail somebody, taking the muzzle off to let them sniff the tracks of the person wanted. When we lead them out, it didn't make any difference how long after they got this scent, they knew it. One time it was ~~six~~ months before we traced and finally got our man. They never forget either. Once I took the dogs out and picked up a man. He was sent up. A long time after that, this same man was sitting on some boxes out in front of a store. I didn't notice him when I led these dogs by but they did and tried their best

to break loose and get him. If they had, they would have torn him to pieces. They could walk in dead leaves without a sound and slip up on a man just like a bird dog spotting birds. Sometimes they howled but you had to train them to keep quiet.

One time we took a caboose and engine up north, stopping in a certain locality trailing a man. He must have stopped more than a dozen times. The dogs didn't pick up the trail until we got near Salina, Kansas--got our man at last.

Then that part of the territory was the dumping ground for the outlaws and thieves from Texas, Arkansas, and the surrounding states. Many had records from Pennsylvania even.

I was in the gang when we ran into the Carpenter bunch. I was shot several times with a sawed-off shot gun by their sister before I got her in the wrist of her gun hand, after I was down. I had also shot her brother. This woman waited on me just the same as she did her brother. I saw this Carpenter woman twice later.

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We were sent out after a gang and Wash Bood was brought in. Old Wash would have got me later if it hadn't been for a popcorn boy warning us. I had gone into the office which was upstairs, when the boy came in and told us a man was hiding in a pile of lumber out by the building. We went to the window and sure enough there was old Wash. He thought he would get me when I came down out of the office.

I don't know whether it was ignorance, courage or what, but a fellow got where he was just like a man who walks a ~~steel~~ beam high up. I was not afraid. A man had to be on his guard and if he was not, someone would slip up on him.

Once I was stationed by the road to watch for a man. I took my stand under a drooping China-berry tree so the limbs and leaves shielded me. I had been watching the road all night. About sun-up the next morning a lady from a farm house nearby asked me to come up and eat breakfast. I told her I couldn't leave my post. She brought me some biscuits and butter. I had just finished eating these when I looked up and saw a man sitting on his horse with his gun pointed at my

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nose. Now, my gun was laying on a post. I couldn't reach it with my right hand without moving and I knew if I moved, he would surely get me. I had to chance getting my gun though and then I put my finger over my right eye and fired and dropped him. I don't know whether he had seen me or not, I think he was just watching the tree in case there might be someone there.

A man should be calm and steady. One time we were sent to the mountains for a man who was supposed to be staying in a cabin up on a hillside. There were five or six of us after this man. We had to follow a winding trail up to the cabin. There was a kind of basement that we had to go through, an underground passage to it. There was a trap door from the basement to the room in which the man was.

Always before entering a close place, to make sure everyone was there, we signaled by touch. The man in the lead would touch the one just behind him and so on until the end was reached. This was answered by a return touch.

After we had all got up in this room, the man at the end was shaking, and if the man we were after had been awake he could have heard this man's heart beat; it was as loud as anyone beating on glass. Of course,

we took this man, but after that T. B. Sexton, the Chief, would always ask if anyone wanted to back out before we started a raid.

We had the right to go anywhere after a man. At one time I was sent to New Mexico trailing a letter to locate a man. That way a man tried to throw us off trail. The man writing would write his letter, place it in an envelope and address it to some person, place this in another envelope, address this to someone else, and so on. Sometimes the letter would be in five or six different envelopes.

I went to New Mexico. We had the post masters helping us. I was in his office watching this letter and soon a man came in. He called for the letter, tore off the first envelope then dropped it back into the office. I looked to see where it was going next. It was to go to some place in Arkansas. I got on the train and followed this letter back to Arkansas.

If there wasn't a train leaving at the time we wanted one, we had the right to call a baboose and engine to take us and our dogs.

One time a girl tipped me off and she didn't know it. She lived next door to our building. As I came

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out one morning she was standing at the fence, reading a letter. I knew her well. As I passed I made out like I was going to grab the letter. She told me I could go on and read it. It was from her sweetheart. I told her I would rather she would read it to me and she did. She asked if I wanted to see his picture. When I saw it I told her I had one just like it. In the letter he had asked this girl to come to Ft. Smith, Arkansas, to a Carnival and to wire him when she was coming. I wanted this man so I told the girl that I would take her over on my pass. We deputies all carried passes. I explained everything to Sexton. There were three of us going then. Sexton and I took everything off us that looked like United States Marshals. The girl had wired the man to meet a certain train. When we got off the train, we had our man spotted before we reached him. Sexton and I had laid our plans. I was to take the girl's arm and go up to the man, let her introduce me; then he would come up and arrest him. I kept my head down ~~away~~ hat shielded my face. When the girl introduced me I took the man's hand in a hard grip and about that time Sexton took him.

That fellow was a good one. He was from some place in Pennsylvania. He had a bunch of keys and \$15,000 in money. He didn't mind telling us all. He had escaped from two or three penitentiaries and was wanted for a number of robberies. He showed us how he blowed a safe and how to make a dark lantern by using an old bucket. He cut a hole near the center in the side of the bucket so the light would shine straight ahead, placed a candle in the bottom and tied a string to the bail. He put this string around his neck. When he entered a place and heard someone coming, he would place his hand over this opening and cut out the light.

We had an old lock that we sometimes used on chains outside of doors. We had him in his cell and he made the statement that he could blow that old lock all to smash, and not hurt anyone. We told him he would blow everything up, We wanted to see what he would do, so we got him a shell. He emptied the powder out, rolled a cigarette paper around the shell and placed it in the hole in the lock, then dropped a nail in this, leaving the head sticking above a little.

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He placed this lock an arm's length from the bars, took the hammer and gave a light tap and the lock bursted like an egg shell.

One Sunday all was very quiet. Some of the boys wanted off and I told the Chief I would watch, all at once this man asked me if I had any friends. I told him that I did. He told me that he would show me that I didn't have a friend at all on the force. I told him he was crazy. He said, "Now, Jim, if you were on the inside here and I was out there in your place, would your friends come up and shoot it out with me to release you? I studied a little bit and said I guessed I didn't have.

He sat there a little bit then said, "I have." "If my friends knew I was in here, they would make you jump the fence or else leave you in a pile there in front."

I spent sixteen years in the service and worked under J. B. Davis, T. B. Sexton, Hackett, and Prichard.