

SAMUELSON, LUDWIG T.

INTERVIEW

9988

79

BIOGRAPHIC FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian Labor History Project for Oklahoma

SAMUELSON,

INTERVIEW

9988

Interviewed by Mrs. Nora Lorrin, El Reno, Oklahoma

Interviewed on (date) February 18 1938

Mr. Ludwig T. Samuelson,

Address El Reno, Oklahoma

Address of firm (or location) 719 South Bickford, St.

DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 21 Year 1873

Place of birth Riley County Kansas

Name of father John Samuelson Place of birth Stockholm Sweden-1839

Information about father Died in 1919

Name of mother Albertine (Larson) Samuelson Place of birth Sweden, 1850

Information about mother

Interviewer should be representative of the field worker dealing with the life and work of the man interviewed. Report to Bureau for selected subjects should be made containing a plain statement if necessary and attach firmly to the back of sheet attached

SAMUELSON,

INTERVIEW

9988

Mrs. Nora Lorrin,
Investigator,
February 18, 1938.

an Interview with Mr. Ludwig T. Samuelson,
El Reno, Oklahoma.

I grew up on a farm in Riley County, Kansas, the same place where I was born and came to Oklahoma Territory, in October of 1893. I made the trip in a covered wagon, a little team of mules, and accompanied by my oldest brother, who came just for the trip. He only stayed three or four days, and then returned to Kansas.

My route was to Abilene, Wichita, Wellington, and down through the Cherokee Strip, over the Old Chisholm Trail. There was still some cattle in the Strip, but not many, and Enid was a city of tents, stores and everything in tents. The little towns that were started in 1892 had some frame buildings, but still had some tents. I came through Kingfisher and Okarche, bought a relinquishment, and filed on the claim which was near Okarche. I built a little shack, twelve by sixteen feet, just a box house and batched three and a half years on this claim until I was married, February 17, 1897.

My claim was just raw prairie but there was a creek running through it, with a few elm trees growing, along its banks. There was no town of Calumet at that time and my claim was located, five miles northeast of the present town of Calumet. I had a spring of fine soft water, and built my little shanty almost in the middle of the claim, in order to be near the water as I had to go five or six miles to get blackjack wood for fuel. Okarche, the nearest trading point was nine miles away and I did most of my trading with Mr. John Heinen, who ran a general merchandise store, at that time in Okarche.

It was three years before I got a crop, getting my first crop the year I was married. I planted fifteen acres to wheat each time and did not raise enough to get my seed back, until the third year, when I made about fifteen bushel of wheat to the acre. I had a few mules, a lister, walking plow, and cultivator, and borrowed a drill from a neighbor. I also had a couple of milch cows, and later some pigs.

There were lots of Indian allotments, around Calumet, about half of the land in that vicinity, belonged to the

SAM ELSON,

INTERVIEW

9988

Indians, but most of them have sold their land to white people until there are only a few Indians who own their own land now.

There used to be an old Indian graveyard about two miles north west of Calumet, next to the river, and there are now three or four of them in that vicinity, along the river, where the sand is deep and soft. I presume the Indians chose those places, because, it would be easy to dig the graves in the soft sand.

When I came to Oklahoma, there were no bridges; if the rivers were up, you stayed at home. In 1895, I took a trip with some friends, into the eastern part of Oklahoma, going through Shawnee; when the stumps were all over town, in the streets, three or four feet high, and many of them quite large. Shawnee was built in a place where there had been thick timber, and large oak trees.

We went down around Muskogee, and Sapulpa, and in our travels had to cross several bridges, across very deep gulleys.

The bridges were made by putting logs across the ravines, and

SAMUELSON,

INTERVIEW

9988

- 4 -

putting logs cross ways on the supporting logs. When we first tried to cross, the mules were scittish and afraid. We had to unhitch them, whip and coax them across, then tie a long rope on the wagon, and pull it across. This was dangerous as there were no bannisters on those bridges. After the mules had crossed the bridges three or four times, they got over their fear of them, and would cross without further trouble.

We left the farm in 1901 and went to Calumet, and entered the mercantile business.

We sold lots of Merchandise to the Indians, when they had the cash to pay for it, but it did not pay to trust them as they were irresponsible. A good many white people were like that too. The names of some Indians, that I was well acquainted with are; "Little Chief", "Bear Robe", "Touch-emCloud", "Kunk Neck", "Hugh Antelope" "Harry Block" and "Red Cloud". The first time "Red Cloud" came into the store, he could not talk English at all, and tried to make me understand who he was, but could not do so until Mrs. Samuelson came in. She was wearing a red dress, and Red

SAMUELSON, L. E. INTERVIEW 9988

- 5 -

Cloud came over to her and took hold of her dress, pulled on it and nearly scared her to death, she did not know but that he might try take the dress off of her. He would go to the door, and point up toward the sky, and finally it dawned on them that he was "Red Cloud" and that was what he was trying to tell them.

I ran the store until 1908, then bought a lumber yard in Calumet, and tried for a time to run both the store and lumber yard, but could not manage both successfully, so sold the store to William Brooks, and then ran the lumber yard, until July, 1936. I was in business in Calumet for thirty-five years. I sold my first farm, but now have eight hundred and forty acres of land. Two hired hands and I worked two of the farms raising wheat, corn and oats.

We have three daughters, the oldest is Mrs. M.E. Thompson, and she lives in Calumet. One is Mrs. Emmet Thompson, wife of the present Judge of Canadian County, and the other is Mrs. Herbert Simms, and she lives in Shawnee. My wife and I now have a nice home at 19 South Bickford, and other than managing our property, we take things easy.