

HULL, PETER

INTERVIEW

#9327

301

Journalist, Elizabeth L. Duncan,  
November 9, 1937.

Interview with Peter Hull,  
Medford, Oklahoma

Born April 25, 1857,  
Churubusco, Whitley County, Ind.

Parents Adam Hull, Virginia.  
Ester Strain, Ohio.

---

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.  
Peter Hull, Medford, Okla.

Peter Hull was born in Churubusco, Whitley County, Indiana, April 25, 1857. He was one of eight children born to the union of Adam and Ester Strain Hull. There were four boys and four girls.

Peter had a happy childhood at home. Of course there was work mingled with their fun. He attended school until he was sixteen years old, then felt he was a full-fledged man, working on the farm side by side with his father.

In 1877 he met Minnie Jane Sagle. After they had kept company for some time they decided to marry, and were married in the Fall of 1878.

They farmed Peter's father's place for a year. Then they rented another place and lived there for three years.

In the meantime, Peter's brother had come to Lyons, Rice County, Kansas, to homestead. He wrote to Peter and told him about this country so Peter decided to come to Kansas.

In January, 1882, Peter, Minnie and their two children, Otha and Arbie, came to Lyons, Kansas, and settled fourteen miles northwest of Lyons.

They endured hardships there the same as in any other new country but they pulled through. In 1885 they had one of the worst blizzards that had struck that part of the country. Many a farmer and rancher lost many head of stock--some of them went "broke." It was a pitiful sight to see the cattle that were frozen to death down on the plains.

On April 22, 1889, at twelve o'clock, when Oklahoma proper was thrown open to homesteaders, Mr. Hull made the run but was unfortunate as he did not have a fast horse, but he was not discouraged. He figured that the Cherokee Strip was sure to open so he went back home.

In 1891 Mr. Hull's house at Lyons, Kansas, burned to the ground, so he did not try to rebuild as he had located a place near Winfield, Cowley County, Kansas.

In September, 1893, one week before the opening, Peter went down to Hunnewell to register. He went down to Hunnewell

-3-

on Sunday night and on Monday morning, at four o'clock, he got in line to wait his turn to register and on Tuesday at noon he registered. He then returned to Winfield to get things together so he could come down to make the run on the 16th.

Peter came down Saturday morning, riding a mule. He thought he had never seen so many people gathered in one place. There were all kinds of conveyances. Some rode fast horses, some slow, but all were grimly determined to stake homesteads.

When the signals were given at twelve o'clock, noon, there was a wild yell and they were off. Some of the people started out on such a dead run that they killed their horses.

Mr. Hull's mule had been used to running and took it pretty steadily. He was not worn out when Peter, after an hour and fifteen minutes, staked his claim--the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ -11-26-3. He stayed on his place watching the other people stake their claims.

That night he wrapped up in two blankets and used the saddle for a pillow. He tied his mule to a small sapling. That night he felt something was wrong as his mule was restless.

---

He got up to see what was wrong. He saw something coming closer--he had no gun, but found a small board which he had

brought with him to put up as a marker for the place he staked. The creature kept creeping closer until he threw the stake at it. It let out a yelp and he then realized that it was nothing but a stray dog someone had lost. He called to it but it was so frightened that it just lay down. He went over to it and patted it and then the poor fellow leaped up on Mr. Hull licking his hands. Peter could not tell what kind of a dog it was but it curled up beside him. The following morning the dog woke Peter by licking him in the face. It was Sunday. He ate what little cold breakfast he had left, sharing it with the large collie dog. Then he saddled the mule so that he could ride over his claim to see what it looked like. After noon he rode over to a neighbor's to see if he could borrow a plow, if he had any. As luck would have it he had one so Peter plowed a furrow around the place. That night he started back to Winfield so he could get more supplies and then go to Enid to file. After he procured his provisions, he then started out toward his claim and then on to Enid but ~~Peter got as far as Pond Creek and then was taken sick. He~~ was taken to the doctor who told him he had better not go on as he was a pretty sick man. Peter told the doctor he was

-5-

on his way to Enid to file, so the doctor made out a certificate and sent it in and he filed that way. He stayed on at Pond Creek until he was better then he returned to Winfield so that he could put out his wheat.

The following month Mr. Hull and family loaded all of their possessions in a wagon and started out, bringing with them two span of mules, two span of horses, one colt, two pigs, two dogs, besides the collie that he found when the Strip opened, five guineas, one breaking plow, one cultivator, and a "topsy" stove that had a drum fastened on to the stove pipe which was used as an oven to bake in. The name of the stove was "Wonder" stove. They also brought a tent in which to live until he built the shack. They were on the way three days.

When they arrived at the homestead Mr. Hull pitched the tent. They unloaded everything and he then went back to Winfield to get enough lumber to build a shack, fourteen by twenty foot, which was called a box house.

---

On the third day after he had returned he found out that when he had almost finished building the house he had forgotten the shingles, so he made a trip to Hunnewell to get shingles to finish the house.

-6-

Then they moved in and they felt it was a most wonderful house after living in the tent.

Mr. Hull then began to break sod. He broke about fifteen acres that first year. Then when Fall came he broke sod for other people to help buy or trade for wire fencing. It was understood for every acre one broke out he was allowed \$100, but money was very scarce as only the Civil War veterans had any money as they drew pensions.

One thing they were well supplied with was wood. Water was gotten from a small spring until a well was dug. No out-buildings had been built for the stock or for chickens and guineas. It seemed before they realized it that winter was upon them.

The first storm came in February after the opening. It was Sunday when it began to snow and it was Wednesday morning before they could get out. Peter had two pigs and when the weather got so they could get out he went out to see if the pigs were smothered, but when he dug them out he found them all warm and not hurt any from being snowed in. After it started snowing they were afraid the chickens would be smothered to death. So they went out and brought them in the house. They pinned quilts on the mules and horses and kept them in the tent, also the cows.

-7-

In the Spring of 1894 Mr. Hull broke out forty acres of sod. He planted corn but it did not mature as it burnt up.

In 1895 Mr. Hull watched for a well with a twig and he had to go down sixteen feet before he struck water, but it was a well that almost supplied the neighborhood. He also planted corn and wheat as he had broken out five more acres of sod. He planted forty acres of wheat, twenty acres of corn, and the corn turned out pretty good.

That winter Peter's money had given out and he and his family were really in need of groceries. They did not even have flour, so Peter went up to Drury to the flour mill to see if he could get some flour. Peter figured if he could not get credit he was going to snatch a sack and run because he was desperate for something to eat. He asked the miller what a sack of flour cost and if he could have it on credit until he could get a little money ahead. The miller told him if he needed any groceries he had a small grocery store, too. The miller's name was Mr. Rapoe.

When Mr. Hull returned home with the groceries the family ~~was happy. They got their groceries from Mr. Rapoe the rest of~~  
the winter.

-8-

In 1896 Mr. Hull planted more corn and the forty acres of wheat produced five hundred bushels. As soon as the wheat was harvested Mr. Hull paid Mr. Rapoe the full amount for the winter supplies.

The wheat he had left he had to put in the little house they were living in and they lived in the tent. The corn also turned out to be good. Later that year Peter built another house and the little house that was first built was used as a granary. The new house was sixteen by twenty-eight feet.

Peter planted wheat and corn again and also in 1897; each produced a bumper crop and it was then that so many people began to build and buy. Money began to circulate.

The first three years Mr. Hull had to haul hay for his stock from the Cozad and Corzine Ranch in Kansas.

The following years Mr. Hull prospered until the depression hit and things began to go from bad to worse. Peter sold his farm and bought property in Medford which they later sold and both Mr. and Mrs. Hull are living with their daughter, Arbie Beal.