

HANWETT, ELLIS

INTERVIEW

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15

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

Field Worker's name Mary D. Derward

This report made on (date) September 2, 1937 1937

1. Name Ellis Hammett

2. Post Office Address Tulsa,

3. Residence address (or location) Sailey Hotel, West Tulsa

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1864

5. Place of birth Fort Smith, Arkansas

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

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 5.

Mary D. Derward, Field Worker
Indian-Pioneer History S-149
September 8, 1937

17

ELLIS HAMMETT
A biographic sketch
From a personal interview with the subject
(Bailey Hotel, West Tulsa, Oklahoma)

Ellis Hammett settled in Indian Territory in 1888, at the age of twenty-four, although, born at Fort Smith, Arkansas, he had gone back and forth across the border since boyhood.

When he came to the Territory several residents of Mascogee and vicinity, Clarence Turner, P.W. Byrnes, and P.N. Blackstone, had put in a thousand-acre farm in the Choska Bottoms south of Coweta and across from Haskell, settled tenants on it and opened a general store to serve the community. The store was known as M.R. Lipcomb & Company, named for a woman member of the Catawba tribe, and it was in this store that young Hammett first went to work in Indian Territory.

Merchandise sales included everything from farm implements to Peruna. Sale of whiskey was prohibited in the Territory but Peruna proved a good substitute. It came in three grades, 1, 2, and 3, number 1 having the highest percentage of alcohol, while number 3 had the highest percentage of medicinal ingredients. Once at Christmas time when

the heavy holiday trade had exhausted the supply of both No. 1 and No. 2, one merry-maker substituted No. 3, consuming such a great quantity of it that his health was permanently impaired by the medicinal content.

Morphine and opium also were sold in large quantities. Opium was in a form resembling putty and was chewed instead of being smoked. Morphine ^{also} was taken internally, the consumer often measuring off a quantity on the end of his pocket-knife and swallowing it in the presence of everyone in the store. There were no restrictions against the sale of anything except whiskey.

FERRIES

In Ellis Hammett's youth a ferry plied the Arkansas River from Ft. Smith, Arkansas, across to the Indian Territory, the Ft. Smith landing being at the west end of Garrison Avenue where a bridge now is. Formerly there was a wharf at that spot, where Mississippi River steamers loaded and unloaded their cargoes. Commodities were then shipped up the river in lighter craft to Ft. Gibson and Ft. Coffee in Indian Territory. In these days cotton was about the only outgoing cargo.

The ferry was equipped with a "cradle" at each landing, making it possible to transport an entire railway train. The Indian Territory end of the ferry was at what is now the town of Meffett. Frank Dalton, a brother of the notorious outlaws and a deputy U.S. marshal, was shot to death at the Territory end of the bridge while raiding a gang of bootleggers in '88.

STAR MAIL ROUTES

Choska Bottoms was on a Star mail route. Mail on such a route was, by contract with the Government, transported on horseback or by horse and buggy after having been brought to a designated point by rail.

AGENCIES

The old agency at Muskegee stood on the hill northwest of Muskegee where the soldiers' home now stands.

SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES

There was no church in Choska Bottoms until about 1890, when the Methodist denomination erected a building which was used as both church and school.

In Muskegee Hammett's son attended a W.C.T.U. school

which stood two blocks east of the M.K.&P. depot.

SECRET SOCIETIES

Among Cherokees exists an organization composed exclusively of fullbloods called the Kee-too-yah society. It keeps the sacred ever-burning fires, and has ceremonials at the grounds near Gere. To no one not a fullblood are the secrets of the society ever revealed.

GREEN PEACH WAR

The trouble known as the Green Peach War was merely some civil difficulty arising among the Creeks, one faction led by Iaparhechar,, the other by Checotah. The U.S. Government sent troops to put an end to the trouble and neither side could claim a victory. It happened in '88 or '89.

FAIRS

Early agricultural fairs at Muskegee were held east of the town near the old Harrell Institute.

In '96 Bob Marshall, a Creek Negro, was a deputy U.S. marshal. He once rode up to the fair gate and gave certain orders to Charles Smith, orders which Smith did not like, so he promptly pulled his gun and shot two shots, killing Marshall, striking another Negro through the body, and shooting the arm off still another Negro.

Tom Galer, a prominent Cherokee citizen, had once been jailed by an officer named Humphrey. Later, after his release he chanced to meet Humphrey and immediately opened fire, the one bullet passing through Humphrey's stomach and killing him, striking a Cherokee bystander through the knee, and passing through the foot of a Negro. This happened in 197.