

STRICKLAND, I. T. (MRS.) SECOND INTERVIEW 8753

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

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Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Herbert Rogers.

This report made on (date) September 20 to 24, 1937. 1937

1. Name (Mrs.) I. T. Strickland.

2. Post Office Address 714 Fourth Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 714 Fourth Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 14 Year 1859.

5. Place of birth Osceola, Missouri.

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 18.

Herbert Rogers,
Field Worker,
Sept. 24, 1937.

An Interview- Mrs. I. T. Strickland.
Alva, Oklahoma.

CHURCHES.

The minister who organized the Congregational Church was the Reverend A. Connet who was born in Green County, Pennsylvania, October 17th, 1834, and was therefore fifty-nine years old when he came to Alva. He was ordained in southern Indiana October 20th, 1861. Hence he had been forty-two years in the ministry when he came West. He came here from Dwight, Morris County, Kansas, and preached his first sermon in Alva, September 24th, 1893, in the C. Hobbie's new store on the north side, pretty well to the east side of the square September 24th, 1893, the Sunday following the opening of the Cherokee Outlet.

The Reverend Mr. Connet assisted in the collection of funds for the erection of the Union church and with his own hands helped to build it. In this church he conducted Thanksgiving services on Thanksgiving Day, 1893. The erection of this church was commenced on Monday and services were held in it on Thursday of the same week as the minister had plenty of voluntary help.

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The Reverend Mr. Connet performed marriage ceremonies at his home one block south of the center of the square and the first couple to be married in Alva or in Woods County were Mr. and Mrs. E. G. McIntire who were married by the Reverend Mr. Connet on Christmas day, 1893; two of the witnesses were Mr. and Mrs. Hatfield, well-known residents of Woods County.

The Congregational church of Alva was organized by the Reverend Mr. Connet on Saturday, December 30th, 1893.

During '94 he and S. L. Johnson secured the Mount Olive church at Wichita, which was torn down and hauled to Alva where it was again erected by R. M. Davis, a carpenter. It was dedicated May 12th, 1895. In the autumn of 1895, the Reverend Mr. Connet resigned, leaving the church with twenty-five members, some of whom still attend church at this church home.

The Reverend Mr. Connet was a good worker and a very good man and Alva lost something when he moved to the western part of Woodward County and many old settlers will recall the Reverend Mr. A. Connet and will remember what a good man he was.

The Christian church was the next to be organized, according to the statistics. It was organized in the old square

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Union Church which was located one block north and one block east of the old Lendrickson Hotel lately rebuilt by George Harbaugh at the northeast corner of the square. This building was torn down and used in the construction of the city hall in 1901.

The Christian church was dedicated May 5th, 1901, by Elder Lee B. Meyers of Wichita who conducted the services with the assistance of Elder Mondy.

The United Brethren church was organized in the year 1896. The Reverend Mr. W. M. Weekly of Dayton, Ohio, came to Alva and purchased two lots one block south of the southeast corner of the square. There was nothing more done until October, 1901, when the Reverend Mr. Beltz of Enterprise, Kansas, came in and held a tabernacle meeting that caused fourteen persons to wish to unite with the church.

At the Oklahoma conference which convened at Enid in November, 1902, the Reverend Mr. Hood was assigned to Alva so he went immediately to work and built a parsonage and started in with seventeen members, holding Sunday School in the William hall.

In November, 1903, J. L. Burkett was assigned to the Alva charge and held it for some years, off and on. The

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Reverend Mr. Burkett also had a charge in the country.

The Methodist church was organized in Alva on the Sunday nearest the 16th of October. The Reverend Mr. M. T. Long, of the Southwest Conference of Kansas, preached the first sermon by a Methodist minister, in a building on the north side, owned by Richard Steel and later used for a saloon. The next service held was in the building erected by G. W. Snyder which was later replaced by a brick building.

The first quarterly meeting was held in February, 1894, at which time it was decided to withdraw from the Union church and hold independent meetings. In this same month a meeting was held in the Beagle restaurant on the South side of the square at which time the formal organization of the M. E. Church was effected. In March, 1894, regular services were held in the District Court room of the Bickel building, which was on the east side of the square.

M. T. Long was the first minister, followed by W. H. McNight, J. R. Millisap, J. F. Oyer, L. S. Ross, J. M. Laird, J. E. Wagoner, Black, and Hodges.

The First Baptist Church was also organized in the old Union church, June 3, 1894, where they worshipped till 1898, when they moved to their present site on the corner of Church

and
College Streets. In June, 1894, the Reverend Mr. Tilsbury became pastor, having been instrumental in the organization. On May 18th, 1896, Reverend Mr. Patton was called to the pastorate. March 31st, 1899, the Reverend Mr. House was called; he accepted the call and remained in Alva for a short time.

December 14th, 1899, the Reverend Mr. A. H. Gore was appointed; March 16th, 1902, the Reverend Mr. J. J. Edge; and July 28th, 1902, the Reverend Mr. Lee T. Fisher was appointed.

The Reverend Mr. A. F. Wasson is pastor of the First Baptist Church in Alva now.

THE STRIP'S OPENING.

Recounted During his Lifetime by I.T. Strickland.

About one week before the Opening, Brother Joe and I, having selected our best riding horses for the occasion, left our homes near Mingona, Kansas, eight or ten miles above Medicine Lodge and rode down to the Landes neighborhood, where our brother-in-law, Babe Morris, lived on a farm, eight or ten miles above or north of Kiowa. We fed our horses corn and oats and began to condition them for what we knew was ahead of them. We would ride around the section at a good fast gallop to get the wind of the horses good. We made this ride once each day for a week or more.

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When the morning of April 16th, 1892, came, the horses were in fine fettle and we mounted and rode down to Kiowa along with hundreds of others, some on horseback and many in wagons and buggies and in two-wheeled carts. We had previously filed, so we rode south of Kiowa and took our stations not more than twenty steps west of where the monument was erected last year.

It was a mixed crowd, with every conceivable kind of conveyance but mostly horseback riders, with many women. All were ready and anxious to go into the unknown land for homes; some were on foot, some in wagons and some in carts, and wagons with four horses attached. A few were mounted on race horses and among these were Young and George Short who were headed for the Sloop and Balenge Springs, which they easily reached as they had two horses each; they would ride one horse a little more than half way, then would turn him loose, mount the other and go like the wind.

Young Short stuck his stake, with the American flag attached, into the middle of the Sloop and Balenge Springs, saying that he wanted to be sure and get water.

We were all in line before twelve o'clock, noon, and as the minutes ticked away, all eyes were on the soldiers just

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inside the line who were to give the signal by firing pistols above their heads. As the time drew near, the boisterous laughing and joking stopped, ^{as} and we tightened the girths of our horses and mounted, nerves grew tense and we leaned forward in the saddle and patted our horses affectionately as the soldier rode out so that the thousands of people could see him and slowly raised his arm with his pistol, while we held our breaths--and "boom" went the gun and the race was on.

It was pell-mell, hurry-scurry, everyone for himself and the devil take the hindmost. There were old grey-headed men, crippled men, strong men, a lot of boys and quite a few women as you can see on the list taken at the anniversary of the thirty-seventh year after.

One group of three or four ladies in a lumber wagon ^{on} kept ahead of us nearly to the crossing/Mule Creek. They were going at a furious rate when down went a wheel. We were anxious to help these ladies, being of a chivalrous type, but there were many people ahead and many behind us so we went to the south. If those ladies got anything to lay claim on they were lucky.

One other little incident I remember at the crossing of Griftwood Creek was when I stopped to rest my horse a bit. I jumped off and ran up the steep bank. My horse, being trained, ran at my heels and when nearing the top, I glanced back and discovered a half dozen fellows off their horses trying to imitate what I was doing but their horses, not understanding, pulled back while the owners were going in little dog trots.

There were four of us together, all armed with stakes with flags at the top. The flags were given us by Uncle Steve Julian, an old soldier who rode in on his horse and secured a claim south of here, and who long since died.

Those of us who stayed together were: Bob Julian who located just north of what is now Short Springs but sold out many years ago, moving back to Kansas; Babe Morris; my youngest brother, Joe, and myself. We switched off the trail and crossed the Salt Fork one mile west of where Ashley now is. We jumped from our horses and ran all the way across the sandy waste, our horses following at our heels.

There were many ahead of us and many behind but we had been across the country many times on hunts and knew about where we wanted to go so we mounted and rode at a good clip

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for two miles and threw out our stake and began looking around and found that Bob Julian had also gotten off and was sticking his stake but when he discovered that I was just a little ahead of him he never said a word but remounted and rode due east for nearly two miles when he again dismounted and stuck his stake in a claim.

My brother rode on to the south, dismounted, and staked his claim. Babe Morris stuck with another fellow but later got a good claim with a stake on it with the name of Nancy Hanks, the name of a famous trotting mare at that time.

Charlie Julian, son of Bob, followed us with a wagon and team and in the evening we all got together and camped just north of my claim, cooking our coffee and frying our salt pork over a fire made of cow chips.

After getting off my horse I took out my watch and saw that I had made the entire trip in one hour and ten minutes.

Mrs. Strickland states that she is proud to say that she still has the homestead and has never had a mortgage on it.

Highway 64 runs right past her house.

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A TRIP DOWN AMONG THE INDIANS.

Told by Mr. Strickland during his lifetime

At the time of this story I was living at Mingona, Kansas, eight miles above Medicine Lodge on the north side of Medicine River. In company with my eldest brother, Lee, I started for the Cherokee Strip on May 10th, 1890.

We drove down by way of Kiowa with a two-horse hack loaded with food and a camping outfit with corn for the horses and we camped for dinner, May 11th, on the north side of the Salt Fork just north of where Ashley station now stands. We passed just west of the Sloop and Balenger ranch. This place is ^{now} called Short Springs. Then we went over the divide between the Salt Fork and the Eagle Chief to a place near the T5 Ranch which was just on the south side; there were thousands of long-horned cattle at Eagle Chief.

On May 12th we crossed the Cimmaron River at the mouth of the Eagle Chief Creek.

This was three years before the opening to settlement and not far from where the town of Cleo now stands.

We drove south and west through the blackjacks and went into camp three miles north of Cantonment which is on the south side of the North Canadian River.

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We camped on the north bank of the river and not long after we had struck camp while my brother was engaged in starting a fire preparatory to getting supper, an Indian from nowhere apparently rode into our camp and without an invitation from us swung himself from his pony and seated himself by our fire to watch my brother get supper. My brother tried to be sociable with the Indian, as he was our company, and tried very hard to keep up a conversation but to all his questions the only answer the Indian would make was to say in a deep guttural voice, "No, no".

When supper was about ready he seemed not to fancy what we had, so mounted his pony and left.

May 13th we pitched up and headed down the valley toward Cantonment and were driving along in a dog trot in the early morning when we chanced to look up the valley to the west and spied a bunch of horsemen which we immediately knew to be Indians. They stopped and bunched up and held a consultation for a few minutes when four bucks, well-armed and mounted, headed our way as fast as their ponies could fetch them and we decided we were in for it, sure and pulled

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our ~~Winchesters~~ a little more closely to us as we did not know what might happen but decided to sell out as dearly as possible.

The Indians came at full speed directly towards us but we didn't slacken our pace but drove on slowly down the dirt trail. They never held up one particle until they caught up with us when they separated and two Indians rode on one side of the trail and the other two on the other at about ten feet behind us which action looked very suspicious to us as they were heavily armed. My hair began to raise up on end and I thought of all the Indian stories we had ever read and of how they had scalped many people not only men but women and children. We decided if they made a bad move to fight it out as best we could for we too knew how to use our Winchesters. Those Indians rode about ten feet behind us for two hundred yards without saying one word. We kept our eyes on them as they looked us all over trying to make out what we were doing in their country. They must have sized us up about right for one of them said in fairly good English "Where go in?" I said, "Cantonment." That was the full conversation but it seemed

to satisfy them for at a signal from the leader they whirled their ponies around and headed back to the main crowd as fast as they came.

We drove across the river to Cantonment where the Government had a big store from which hundreds of Indians got their rations as there were many hundreds of Indians in tepees; in fact, it was an Indian village where the Indian maidens were wooed and won by the young bucks.

The Indian maidens were somewhat like our girls of today; they used much red paint and they looked attractive and healthy. I do not remember how many soldiers were stationed there at that time to keep the Indians in the straight and narrow path. We should have gone to headquarters and sought permission to go farther into their country but did not.

One thing we noticed was that while we were in the big store getting some supplies, in came three or four big Cheyennes and each bought himself a box of axle grease and slipped outside, opened the box and began eating the axle grease. We watched them as we were a bit curious. They grimaced a few times and went on eating the grease as if it were good. They seemed to think it was some sort of

canned goods. We drove southwest on ^{the} trail which led us through some more blackjacks and camped that night on the north side of the South Canadian on a trail leading to the Washita. The land in here was pretty broken and sandy but had its redeeming qualities of good grass and fine timber and plenty of spring water.

On May 14th, we crossed to the South Canadian river and traveled down about one mile when we recrossed to the north side again. We went down five or six miles and turned in a northeast direction. We saw a number of very fine streams of water; the water ^{was} as clear as crystal and tasted good. We then drifted back into the blackjacks and turned a southeasterly course as the river makes a bend here. We saw some pretty fair highlands and the canyons were filled with the finest of timber consisting of burr oak, chinquapin, elm, walnut and coffee bean, post oak and white oak. On May 15th, we again came near to the South Canadian and heading down this river we saw the fine forests.

Up to this time we had not seen a human form of any kind since leaving Cantament, as they called it at that time.

Now we emerged where the Indians were farming five or six-

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acre tracts. At that time they would not farm or plow the full length of their field but would cut the length of the field in two so as to make a better showing, as they thought, in a day's work. We again angled and crossed over to the south side of the river. The water was very low or we could not have done this for as the cowboys expressed it, the Canadian River would bog a saddle blanket. We crossed over safely and went into camp near the finest timber I believe I have ever seen.

On May 10th, we again crossed to the north side of the river where we saw three deer but got no shot. In some fine timber was an extremely large house which the Government had erected for an Indian chief and his family but instead of living in the white man's style he had put up his tepee nearby and was living in that.

A little farther down we ran up against an old Indian Chief who must have been a trader as he wanted to trade some ponies for our pack or spring wagon.

He talked altogether by means of signs and gesticulations, as he could not speak our language, but he made us understand that he would give us two ponies for our spring wagon and harness.

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I tried to explain that we could not get home without our wagon as we had bedding and guns and cooking outfit but he stopped me and placing two fingers of one hand over the other showed us how we could put bedding on the ponies and mount straddles and go off in a lope. We tried to inquire where we were but he could not tell us so he jumped on our hack and said with a motion to go on. We drove on about a half mile into an Indian village and the way those tepees emptied was a caution - old and young, handsome painted maidens and Indian dogs, and we thought we were "goners" this time. Among these Indians was a beautiful Indian maiden perhaps eighteen years of age who sidled up to me and bashfully inquired in as good English as I could command "Where do you want to go?" She had been away to school and had only recently returned and from her we received our bearings. I had picked up the finest pair of deer horns I ever saw and I had them on the back of the hack; so when that old Chief rolled off he must have jerked them off as we never did see them any more.

We had gone not more than two miles when we spied a number of horse back riders some distance away. They saw

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us at about the same time so here they came pell-mell straight for us and never let up until they had us surrounded, which brought us to a stop, when they all eyed us suspiciously and critically.

One young buck rode up beside us and inquired in splendid English where we thought we were going and what we were going in the Indian country. He had been over in Pennsylvania where he attended school and was a bright fellow. He was the son of some chief whose name I cannot remember at this time. In this bunch of horsemen was a young Cheyenne who had two wives. The educated young Indian pointed this man out to us saying that one of this man's squaws was a Cheyenne and the other was an Arapaho and he told us that these two squaws would fight like cats over their husband, this ugly buck.

This group of Indians was going out to kill a beef and this young chief explained that none of the meat would go to waste, as the entrails would ^{even} be eaten.

This young buck was the son of Chief Black Bear and had been to Philadelphia and was well educated.

We parted company with this crowd of Indians but had not gone far when an old Indian and his squaw stopped us

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and said they were very hungry, by signs. The chief said that he was "heap big Chief O'd Crow" who with Chief Wild Hog and Chief Drill Knife in January, 1879, broke away from the soldiers in the Indian Territory and went to the North with their squaws and papooses and a few warriors, finally getting up into North Dakota, by fighting all the way and being only half dead when they reached there.

We gave him and his squaw some cookies and week-old biscuits which they seemed to appreciate greatly, O'd Crow, by licking his lips and grunting and by signs, giving us to understand that the food was good.

He seemed to be quite an intelligent old chief.

We drifted on down the South Canadian, going out at Union Town which was at that time at the end of the railroad. We turned north through El Reno which was only a small place; through Hennessey; through the blackjacks and on past Twin Springs and through where the place Cherokee now stands, not seeing any men, but cattle, cattle by the hundreds, as Drum's Ranch was just north between Cherokee, Oklahoma Territory, and Kiowa, Kansas.