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INDEX CARDS

Freighter
Cherokee Strip
Cherokee Nation
Cherokee Strip Livestock Association
Freedman
Surveying
Pawnee Indians
Ghost Town-Lakemp

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

Field Worker's name Linnaeus B. Ranck

This report made on (date) September 22, 1937 193 7

1. Name W. L. Allen

2. Post Office Address Gage, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1868

5. Place of birth Lincoln, Nebraska

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father Old Government Freighter

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 _____

ALLEN, W. L.

INTERVIEW

8641

Interview with W. L. Allen
Gage, Oklahoma

W. L. Allen was born at Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1868. His father was a native of Missouri and freighted for the United States Government over the western plains to California before the Civil War. His sympathies were with the Union at the outset of the war but by a peculiar twist of fate he later became a Confederate Recruiting Officer.

In 1868 the father of W. L. Allen was at Lincoln, Nebraska, where he had homesteaded on land now within the City of Lincoln. With ox teams he freighted stone for Nebraska's first Capitol Building.

During the late '70s W. L. Allen lived at Sun City, Kansas, with his parents. The family was located near Denver for awhile, too. About 1885 they lived a short time at Medicine Lodge, Kansas. Mr. Allen was with his father on a number of trips the latter made trailing Colorado range horses to Missouri during the early '80s. These trips led the family to settle in the Cherokee Nation of Indian Territory. About '86 they trailed the last

ALLEN, W. L.

INTERVIEW

8641

2

herd of Colorado ponies east and traded most of them for cattle. The family then moved to the Cherokee Nation, locating about twenty-three miles south of Coffeeville, Kansas. Here all of their cattle died of the Texas fever. After they moved to the Cherokee country W. L. Allen worked for various ranchmen.

Mr. Allen said that little farming was done in the Cherokee country at that period; the one great industry was cattle ranching. Range for stock was limitless and grass abundant. Most of the cattle then in the Cherokee Nation were from Texas.

The Cherokee Tribal Laws forbade land leasing within that Nation, nevertheless, leasing was general and indiscriminate. Conspiring together, the cowmen and the Indians very successfully circumvented the law against leasing the Cherokee lands. This seems rather strange but Mr. Allen said the Cherokees, generally speaking, showed utter disregard for this particular tribal regulation and violated it with impunity.

ALLEN, W. L.

INTERVIEW

8641

3

Stock grazing in the Cherokee Nation was operated on a fee basis. The owner of the cattle paid 50¢ per head per year for his pasturage concession. This fee was paid to the Cherokee citizen who supposedly maintained control of the range around this location. An effort was made to keep cattle within certain limits. Grazing concessions and cattle intermingled much. General round-ups, when necessary, served to protect every ranchman.

To circumvent the law against grazing leases the citizen of the Nation ostensibly always owned the cattle he was merely grazing for another party. In many instances, however, and to make this sham practice appear more genuine on the surface, the Indian granting the pasture right was employed by the true owner of the cattle to assist in range riding and attending the cattle the "underground" agreement covered. It can be understood that this practice proved a very lucrative source of cash income for Cherokees who indulged in it.

ALLEN, W. L.

INTERVIEW

8641

4

If land was leased from a Cherokee citizen for farming purposes the agreement between the parties of interest was ~~fictitious~~, too; to evade the Tribal Law the lessee was ostensibly only the hired servant of the lessor. And if the Indian, or Cherokee citizen, otherwise shared in the crop raised on the land farmed by the lessee, the latter's share of the crop was supposedly his compensation for services rendered the lessor.

This arrangement, both as to grazing and farming leases, worked well and very satisfactorily with all citizens of the Cherokee Nation being parties of direct interest except the "Freedmen". They were the "trouble makers", says Mr. Allen.

With respect to the Freedmen of the Cherokee Nation, history says that Treaty Provisions "granted full tribal citizenship" to the Cherokee Freedmen. Mr. Allen claims though, that they were granted but forty acres each, or at least that was all they controlled. At any rate, following the close of the Civil War many Kansas negroes came to the

Cherokee Nation and intermarried with the Cherokee Freedmen. These Kansas negroes, becoming intermarried citizens of the Cherokee Nation, according to Mr. Allen, were often times disagreeable and troublesome people. In the case of their leasing land to white men to farm it was common practice for them to agitate trouble with their tenants on the most fictitious pretexts, once a crop had been grown, and brazenly take the latter's portion of the crop since, as they well knew, the tenant had no recourse under the Cherokee law. Mr. Allen himself encountered just such unpleasantness with a former Kansas negro from whom he rented farm land. In Allen's case, however, he forced his right to his share of the crop at the point of his Winchester rifle.

With the aid of unscrupulous lawyers, then resident in the Cherokee Nation, beyond a doubt many people deliberately but wrongfully claimed and maintained indefinitely all the rights and benefits of the lawful Cherokee citizens. Mr. Allen thinks this was true beyond any doubt whatsoever, and

ALLEN, W. L.

INTERVIEW

8641

6

said that a prominent part Cherokee encouraged his father to claim such rights and benefits since Mr. Allen's mother was decidedly dark and blackheaded. A certain clique of lawyers of the Cherokee Nation would file in due form such a claim for a fee of \$5.00. And as the part Cherokee told Allen's father "it would take the Government thirty years to disprove the claim."

During the period preparatory to ~~allotting~~ the Cherokee lands Mr. Allen worked with a crew surveying in the Cherokee Nation. In this endeavor he said they encountered much trouble and interference from the older fullblood Indians. The latter vigorously opposed allotment and made a practice of destroying and dislocating lines and corners established by the surveyors. Many corner stones placed by the surveying crew were taken up and thrown into a river or creek by the protesting Cherokees and this practice rendered surveying of their lands rather slow and difficult. True enough, any Indian caught or proven to have dislocated any of the surveys was prosecuted; but catching an offender was next to impossible. Mr. Allen thought much of the Cherokees and stated

ALLEN, W. L.

INTERVIEW

8641

7

that he came near to marrying a part Cherokee girl by the name of Vinita whose family name was given to the town called Vinita.

About 1896 Mr. Allen moved from the Cherokee ~~country~~ to the Pawnee Indian lands and settled on a relinquishment about seven miles west of the town of Ralston. Here he farmed and maintained a country store for a number of years. While in the Pawnee ~~country~~ he served as a deputy Sheriff for a number of years and during the time he served as a peace officer he was with the veteran Oklahoma peace officers, Bud Ledbetter and Bill ~~Tilghman~~ on occasions when the latter pursued lawless characters of the Indian Territory.

The year of 1903 he ventured west over the Beaver County Trail and filed on a claim a few miles southeast of where the old town of LaKemp was built, about 1907. After filing, however, he returned to the Pawnee ~~country~~. About 1906 he established his family on the Beaver County ~~home-~~stead. In the meantime though and during the years 1903 to 1906 he made several trips from Ralston to Beaver County

ALLEN, W. L.

INTERVIEW

8641

8

trailing horses, wagons etc., he had bought from the Pawnee Indians to Beaver County and sold them to the settlers.

He was one of the main men in establishing the town of LaKemp, which occurred about 1907. For the grand opening quite a program was planned. He and his partner in the undertaking promoted a three day celebration and on one of the three days they sold 200 town lots at auction. For the lot sale they employed the veteran auctioneer of this section, Col. S. C. Pettyjohn of Woodward. This event no doubt should be outstanding in Beaver County's history. The town of LaKemp was abandoned over twenty years ago and most of it moved several miles south to Hooker, Texas, a town that was founded on a new railroad built into the Texas north Panhandle.

Mr. Allen was in business in Forgan, Oklahoma, for a number of years and is now a resident of Gage.