

Notice of Copyright

Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.

Use of certain published materials and manuscripts is restricted by law, by reason of their origin, or by donor agreement. For the protection of its holdings, the Western History Collections also reserves the right to restrict the use of unprocessed materials, or books and documents of exceptional value and fragility. Use of any material is subject to the approval of the Curator.

Citing Resources from the Western History Collections

For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

An example of a proper citation:

Oklahoma Federation of Labor Collection, M452, Box 5, Folder 2. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW

#8910

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

Field Worker's name Ruth E. Moon

This report made on (date) October 18 1937

1. Name Charles C. Alling

2. Post Office Address Guthrie, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 217 E. Mansure

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 18 Year 1867

5. Place of birth Wisconsin

6. Name of Father C. P. Alling Place of birth Ohio

Other information about father Veteran of Civil War

7. Name of Mother Euna Perrin Place of birth Indiana

Other information about mother Of a Southern family

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 11.

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW.

8919

A biographical sketch of the
life of Charles C. Alling.

Mr. Alling's father was a Union soldier in the Civil War and his mother, although born in Indiana, was of a southern family. They were married in Wisconsin and lived there until 1882, when they moved to Crowley County, Kansas.

That part of Kansas was mostly ranches at that time. The Allings had three hundred and twenty acres of land and did both farming and stock raising.

Charles C. Alling was just a little past twenty-one when this country was opened. He and a friend had planned on making the race together on horseback but the friend's father was taken sick and he could not go. This caused a delay. Finally Mr. Alling set out with another man who was driving a span of mules to a spring wagon that belonged to Alling, who rode beside it. Supplies of groceries, blankets, etc., for both of them were in the wagon.

It was Friday evening when they reached Arkansas City. The crowd had been held along that line until Thursday noon, when the soldiers had let the people

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW.

8910

2

proceed to the southern edge of the Strip. But the trails were still jammed with wagons and horses, and the soil was so badly cut up and so muddy that they decided they could never reach the starting place by noon Monday in that way, so they struck out southwest across the prairie.

It was not so crowded that way and the ground was firm but they still had plenty of company and had a hard time crossing the creeks which were "up" at the time.

The Chikaskia was high and full of floating driftwood when they reached it sometime Friday night. They waited awhile on the bank, trying to think of a way to cross. Rain again began to fall. Several other wagons arrived, and with everyone working, a raft was built of logs tied together and the wagons were taken across on it. Big bonfires were kept going on both banks to make a light. By morning the wagons were all across.

When they came to Salt Fork they passed the Indian village and went on to Yellow Bull Crossing, where the river is narrow. Yellow Bull Crossing is now inside the city limits of Tonkawa. One man swam the Salt Fork and took his team over with all the lariat ropes tied

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW.

8910

3

together and fastened to a double-tree. By this means the wagons were pulled across. The wagons started leaving Yellow Bull Crossing at sunrise on Sunday morning.

Later that day they came to Red Rock Creek. The brush was so thick that they had to chop their way through it, and the stream was in a deep ravine. The wagons had to be lowered into it by the ropes and raised in the same way on the other side.

Mr. Alling was afraid he would not reach the starting place on time and pushed on as fast as he could. He became separated from his wagon in this way. He had not stopped to eat anything since Saturday night, and the only rest he took was about two hours early Monday morning. He thinks that he was a little north of Covington at that time. He started out again about five o'clock Monday morning and reached the line before noon. He crossed the line just north of Marshall.

After riding hard for awhile, he had left all the wagons and some of the other horseback riders behind him when he came to a beautiful glade, north of the present site of Crescent. He turned in there, unsaddled

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW.

8910

4

his mount and turned him loose to roll and rest awhile. About a half mile away were several wagons which he knew could not have gotten there since the proper starting time. Mr. Alling was cutting his initials on a post oak tree when a big red whiskered man, armed with two revolvers, two cartridge belts and carrying a Winchester appeared and asked him, "Thinking about staying long here?"

"Well, it's a pretty place but I'm just letting my horse rest a little."

"That will be all right, but I wouldn't stay long if I were you. Sixteen of us men in here have an oath to stick together. It's really quite an unhealthy place. There is lots of malaria and some people even die of lead poison."

Mr. Alling said he decided that the odds of sixteen to one was too big and he moved on as soon as possible.

He took the SW4 of Sec. 22, T. 16, R. 4W .

It was about 4:00 O'Clock on Tuesday afternoon before Mr. Alling had a real meal. One of his neighbors, Bob Hancock, who had made the run from the east line gave him a piece of meat and a "wad" of flapjack, both of which

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW.

8910

5

were muddy and water-soaked but Mr. Alling says they tasted good.

Hancock and a friend, Charlie Taylor, had cooked some meat and flapjacks while waiting on the Iowa line. They put them in the saddle bags on Taylor's pony. On the way in the pony tried to cross a stream and got bogged down. Charlie Taylor had a hard time getting his horse out of the mud and the lunch in the saddlebags was soaked with the muddy water and because of being rubbed and jolted around so hard the flapjacks were reduced to a muddy ball of dough.

Mr. Alling built a sod house on his claim and in '91 married Miss Annie Evans from his home neighborhood in Kansas. They owned this place until about 1903, when they sold it.

After the opening of the Strip, Mr. Alling established a nursery at Perry, which he believes was the first one in Oklahoma. But he had bad luck with it. He sold \$12,000.00 worth of stock in the western part of the territory but such a drouth came on that people could not dig the holes to plant the trees. One carload each to

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW.

8910

6

Anadarko, Lawton and the east half of the state all met the same fate and did not pay shipping expense and worse still he had \$8,000.00 worth of stuff just delivered to him, and it was so dry that it was impossible to plant it at the nursery.

The city of Perry owned a big pump which was no use to it because the town had no adequate water supply. Mr. Alling bought this pump from the city at only a fraction of its cost and hastily moved it and his \$8,000.00 stock of unplanted stuff to Guthrie.

He tried to lease the quarter-section between Cottonwood Creek and the Cimarron River north of town which belonged to a man named Murray. Mr. Murray would not lease this land but he made the terms of sale so attractive that Mr. Alling bought it. He paid \$500.00 down, and signed notes for \$500.00 every six months until the price of \$9,100.00 should be paid.

Mr. Alling then installed the big pump on the bank of the Cottonwood Creek. The Cimarron River being salt water cannot be used for irrigating. He then began to throw water on his land. A big crew of men worked day

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW.

8910

7

and night for about two weeks getting that stuff planted. This was in December. These workmen used flares, placed at intervals on the bank of the cottonwood creek when they worked at night.

The trees and shrubbery got started off well and prospects were quite bright until a hail storm came along in June and destroyed all the young trees in an hour. This practically ended Mr. Alling's career as a nursery man. He offered to deed the place back to Mr. Murray to save foreclosure proceedings but Mr. Murray told him to keep it and maybe he could work it out. And he did. By selling ten and twenty acre tracts at good prices he finally paid for the farm and cleared up all that he owed Mr. Murray and the nursery firm.

Then, he put in the Guthrie Marble Works which he operated until just a few years ago, when because of his health, he sold. He still makes sales for the company whenever he is feeling well enough to go on short trips.

During the years when he was actively engaged in this business--beginning about 1905--he traveled a good deal in the Indian country and had some interesting experiences

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW.

8910

8

with the Indians.

One day he was visiting a minister, the Reverend Mr. Hamilton, a Baptist Missionary to the Cheyennes and Arapahoes, near Watonga. It was time for a service at the mission church and Mr. Alling went with them and sat upon the platform. A wash boiler full of roasted beef and its juices was set in front of the platform and three wash-tubs full of bakers' bread were placed beside it. Mrs. Hamilton made up some sandwiches for her husband and the guest and the Indians helped themselves, after which they listened to the sermon.

Outside the window sat a young woman with her back to the building. Every little while she would let out an unearthly howl then would be quiet for a time, then howl again. As soon as the service was over, Mr. Alling asked the missionary what ailed that woman. Mr. Hamilton explained that a man whom this girl had loved had died in the winter when the ground was so hard that it broke up in big clods. They had piled the grave as high as possible with the clods but when the rains came and softened them the dirt settled until the grave was not quite full. The

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW.

8910

9

girl thought that the bottom had dropped out of the grave and had let him fall through and no one had been able to convince her that she was mistaken. That day the men took spades and dug down quite deep, then with a metal bar the missionary probed through the remaining dirt and struck the box that contained the casket. When the young woman heard the sound of the bar on the box she began laughing and went away happy because her lover was still there.

One day Mr. Alling came to a nice church away out in the timber between Holdenville and Okemah. There was a crowd so he stopped to see what was going on. Beside the well-built church, there was an arbor made with cement posts and shingled roof. A row of cook houses along the fence contained good steel ranges. Chief Sapulpa's wife was there and made Mr. Alling welcome. He knew Chief Sapulpa and his wife well; he had put up a big family stone for them after their seventeen-year-old son had died. A conference of the Indians of the South Methodist church was being held here. Mr. Alling stayed

ALLING, CHARLES C.

INTERVIEW

8910

10

for a part of the meeting but left before dinner was served. The sermon was preached by a very old man who was probably ninety years old. Mr. Alling said, "I could not understand one word he spoke, but he was so earnest and reverent that I listened spell-bound to him and that sermon affected me more than any other I ever heard."

A young Kiowa, Sherman Chadleson, used to drive for Mr. Alling and help him locate the Indians whom he wanted to see. He used to tell Mr. Alling bits of his people's history, but Mr. Alling did not write them down. One story which he recalls is about the time the Kiowas went up into the Osage country and stole some ponies. The Kiowas stayed close and watched for a year for the Osages to come and take vengeance on them. Then the Kiowas got careless, and when they were not expecting them the Osages came and killed many by cutting their throats. The place is called Cut Throat Mountain.

In looking for an Indian one day, Mr. Alling entered a house and found the man with eight or ten others lying around or leaning against the wall. Their faces were pale;

ALLING, CHARLES C. INTERVIEW.

8910

11

their eyes were queer and there was a strange vacant expression on each face. They were having a peyote feast, and Mr. Alling backed out.

He has eaten sofka, which is a dish of whole fermented corn that tastes somewhat like malt but usually he did not eat the Indian dishes.