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BOWLING, H. E.

INTERVIEW

#4885

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

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Field Worker's name Lillian M. Cassaway
This report made on (date) June 17, 1937

1. Name H. E. Bowling
2. Post Office Address Anadarko, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) 208 West Alabama Avenue.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 2 Year 1867
5. Place of birth Kentucky

6. Name of Father Berry Bowling Place of birth Tennessee
Other information about father _____
7. Name of Mother Lawson Place of birth Tennessee
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

Lillian Cassaway
Field Worker

June 17, 1937

An interview with H. E. Bowling
208 West Alabama Ave. Anadarko,
Oklahoma.

I was a deputy marshal among the Chickasaws.

My father Perry Bowling was born in Tennessee
1830.

My mother, Mrs Lawson Bowling was born in
Tennessee 1832 and died in 1906.

I came to Oklahoma in 1894 and lived four miles
north of Allen on South Canadian River.

The worst thing we had to contend with in 1894
were the horse and cattle thieves, especially the
horse thieves. A person was hung quicker for steal-
ing a horse than for murder. It didn't do any good to
lock your horses in a barn against the thieves as they
would almost tear the barn down. We had to chain our
horses. We had free range for cattle in those days
and frequently the cattle would be taken. They would
wander pretty far away from home and these horse thieves
would steal them and ship them out of the country.

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Many times I have traced cattle to Kansas City. One time I traced down some that were stolen and shipped out, and found that one of the neighborhood boys had stolen them.

Bob Nestor, Bill McCall, and Bob Barley were marshals and Fan Dickerson was commissioner while the headquarters were at Stonewall, but when it was moved to Center a man named Guinn was commissioner.

Dr. Lewis came after Calvin was built. He had made a lot of money and there were no banks anywhere close, so the money was kept in the house. His son knew about this money being in the house, so for a share of it he agreed to help rob his father. The men were caught and in the confession the boy was named as having helped them. The boy confessed to his part in the deal.

I was a deputy marshal and the Indians would have me to marshal all of their gatherings. I was at Red Springs at the last Cry of the Chickasaws. This was a day for lamenting the dead. These meetings lasted only one day. The relatives of the dead would meet and go to the cemetery and mourn for their loved ones as if they had just died. The self-inflicted torture was terrible. Sometimes

a white preacher would come with his interpreter and hold services in the morning and then the Cry would last only a half day.

They had dances for different occasions. Each dance had a purpose. They had the Pashofa feast and dance. This pashofa was made from squaw corn. The women would put the squaw corn mortar and work it with a pestle until the husk would come off. Then it was put in a large kettle and boiled with pork. Sometimes several of the kettles would be full at once. They would kill the hogs just for this purpose. They feasted on this pashofa then they had the Pashofa dance. This was for a sick person or for one who might be sick. They always faced their tent to the east, the sick person was placed in this tent and then the dancers would dance around him. No one was allowed to pass between him and the door except the dancers. If any one got in the way of the door he was quietly taken to a seat. A person was not punished for this but he must not pass between the sick person and the door. They would dance around the patient until he either got well or died.

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They had the Green Corn Dance that is held once a year, usually in June and lasted five days. This is a medicine dance. At the end of this dance period every one is given a drink of medicine made from the green corn.. It was a very nauseating drink and made most of them pretty sick. This dose of medicine was supposed to take care of them for the next year.

Then there was a hideous test to see whether a baby was going to be a tough man. They had hooks very similar to pot hooks with which they would catch the baby in the sides and lift it off the ground. If the baby did not cry or squirm he would make a tough man, if it did cry or squirm he was not going to be any good. Sometimes the child was badly injured.

Three Federal Courts were instituted in Indian Territory in 1896. Before these courts were established I remember the last Indian brought in on a murder charge. After his arrest he was allowed to stay at home until the day of the trial. On that day he appeared alone. He was sentenced to be shot. The Federal Government objected and gave him another trial and set him free.

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Later he killed his brother and the Government took him to Texas. The Indians were bad about fighting among themselves, brothers especially.

We had a dreadful time with toughs. This didn't last very long but it was bad while it lasted. There was a man who was part Indian and part negro. He denied the negro blood, but nevertheless it was there. He was the worst tough we had to deal with. The marshals were after him one day, in a forest. There was not much underbrush, just tall trees. This man's name was Bruner Indian. McCall was after him and Bruner shot him in the back. The wound didn't seem to amount to very much but it wasn't long after McCall got home until he died from this wound.

This was all between 1894 and 1898. Most of these early customs of the Indians have been changed in the years since.