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BOMHOFF, DICK.

INTERVIEW

10349

220

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

BOMHOFF, DICK

INTERVIEW

10349

Field Worker's name Mrs. Nora Lorrin, El Reno, Oklahoma.This report made on (date) March 23, 19381. Name Dick Bomhoff,2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma.3. Residence address (or location) 917 West Hayes Street4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 27 Year 18665. Place of birth Germany6. Name of Father Henry Bomhoff, Place of birth Germany,
about 1844.7. Name of Mother Mary Bomhoff, Place of birth Germany, 1840.Other information about mother Died in 1918.

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 4.

BOMHOFF, DICK

INTERVIEW

10349

Mrs. Nora Lorrin,
Investigator,
March 23, 1938.

Interview with Dick Bomhoff,
917 West Hayes Street,
El Reno, Oklahoma.

I was born in Germany, March 27th, 1866. I came from Germany to the United States in 1879, settling near Lincoln, Nebraska. I stayed in Lancaster County, Nebraska, until I heard of the coming Opening of the Cheyenne and Arapaho lands that were to open in April of 1892. I did not have much money and when I heard about these lands, I decided it was a good chance for me to get a free homestead. I came down on the train with a friend by the name of Harry Smith. I had no horse and I had to make the Run on foot. The soldiers and people were lined up east of Okarche for miles. The soldiers were there to keep the people in order. I made the Run one mile east and two miles south of Okarche, and only had to run a half a mile before driving my stake. The friend that came with me had a horse to make the Run, and he got a claim just three miles west of the claim I staked. He liked the claim I staked better than the one

BOMHOFF, DICK

INTERVIEW

10349

-2-

he got and I liked Mr. Smith's claim better than he did his, so we just traded, each filing on the other fellow's claim, instead of filing on the one he had staked. After filing on our claims, we went back to Nebraska. I bought a spring-wagon and a team of scrub ponies. I then came back to Oklahoma, bringing a neighbor boy with me. The young man that came with me did not like this wild country and he went back to his home in Nebraska.

Okarche was a rough looking little town, but it was a lively place. There wasn't much money but what there was, was circulating.

My claim was one mile west and two miles south of Okarche. After building a little twelve by fourteen foot shanty, I built a small barn large enough to shelter three horses. Then I broke out twenty acres of ground and planted it to oats. I did not thresh it but fed it in bundles to my horses.

In 1893 I married a girl whom I knew and kept company with before I left Nebraska. I batched on my claim for

BOMHOFF, DICK

INTERVIEW

10349

-3-

the first year. We had been planning to be married, but were waiting and working to save enough money so that we could have something to start on. We did not have much. The second year I broke out more land and planted it to wheat and did very well. I put out an orchard and had everything in the line of fruit we could think of. There was no wild fruit near us and we did not have any fruit until our orchard came into bearing, but had all that we needed after that. We planted two orchards while I was living on our farm but the first one died out and the last one seems as if it is going to do so too.

There were lots of prairie chickens and quail in the early days, and always wild geese and wild ducks.

One time I shot into a bunch of wild ducks that were in a huddle on one of my ponds and killed twenty ducks at one shot. I shared my good luck with my neighbors. There were no game laws at that time and you could kill as many ducks as you were lucky enough to hit without fear of being arrested for it.

BOMHOFF, DICK

INTERVIEW

10349

-4-

We raised quite a few cattle. We were frugal and saving and improved our homestead gradually, living on it for eighteen years. Then we had an opportunity to trade for another piece of land, consisting of three quarter sections adjoining each other. We thought it was a good trade, so we traded and so acquired another place to improve. This property was located two miles south and two and a half miles west of Okarche. We built a very nice large farm home on this property, put out an orchard, built a barn and fixed it up pretty nice; living on the place for twenty-six years. My wife and I had ten children, seven of whom are living.

We own the beautiful little cottage we now live in at 917 West Hayes, and we still own the farm we traded for.

We bought our first car, an early model Ford, in 1915. We were very proud of it and "went places". Our children all live in Canadian County.