



ENGLAND, JIM

INTERVIEW

BIOGRAPHY FORM

4736

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Carl H. Mayfield

This report made on (date) July 2 1937

1. Name Jim England

2. Post Office Address Optima, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 17 Year 1871

5. Place of birth Memphis, Tennessee

6. Name of Father Judge H. H. England Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Frances Gold 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

Carl H. Mayfield  
Fieldworker  
July 2, 1937

Interview with  
Jim England  
Optima, Oklahoma.

My first sight of No Man's Land was in the Spring of 1886 while passing through it with a trail herd from Odessa, Texas, to Dodge City, Kansas. I got work down on the border with a man known as "Gotch" Callens, a nickname, of course, given because one of his ears had been shot which caused the rest of it to turn down in a peculiar manner. I don't think I ever knew his real name, as I was only with him about two weeks down in Texas and about four or five days after we reached Dodge City, when he came out to receive his herd and to ship them east from Dodge City.

We left the Double Mountain country about February 20th, coming north across the Texas plains. We struck the South Canadian River some place near Canadian City and followed it up-stream to a point near where Morger is now, to a crossing known as Dixon's Point about twenty-five miles west of Adobe Walls, in those days known as Moby Walls. We followed up stream on account of high

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water, hoping thereby to cross the swollen stream. We finally became discouraged. We put our horses into the stream and swam them out to the first sand where they could stand, using them as decoys for the cattle. We started the herd in, then moved the horses on far enough in the lead to give the cattle room. We landed the remuda on the north bank, but were not so lucky with the cattle. About fifteen hundred head of Mexican cattle, the leaders of the herd, swam like ducks while the others turned back, which left the horse wrangler and me on the north side with a hundred head of horses and about fifteen hundred head of cattle while the balance of the men and about fifteen hundred cattle and the wagon were on the south bank.

Night came on and the horse wrangler and I had no choice, as we could not turn the stock loose, so he held the horses and I herded the cattle until morning. The water had receded some during the night, although still deep enough to swim in the main channel. The men on the south side were afraid to try the river on their tired horses. So I drove the remuda back, leaving

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the wrangler to herd the cattle. We changed horses and pushed into the water, leading with the horses to pack the quicksand for the cattle. We made it by nine o'clock with the horses and cattle. The cook pulled in and got about three hundred feet from the north bank and let his lead mules tangle up and bog down. We got them loose and by tying all the ropes we had on to the wagon, we managed to float the old bread basket ashore just as another head rise came down. Our chuck was badly sanded but it was surely good when we got some of it cooked.

We had no more trouble from there on but had lots of rain; the lakes were all full of water and grass was fine. We crossed the north line of Texas about fifteen miles east of where Hitchland now stands. Knowing we were somewhere near what was commonly called the "Neutral Strip," we spread our herd and quit the trail and loose herded for about ten days before starting on for Dodge. It was then that I learned to love "Old No-Man's Land." At that time I had never seen as good grass any place.

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We had four Mexican riders and a Mexican cook. These boys had heard of wild horses but had never seen any.

While we were resting and grazing our herd we had a lot of leisure time and no place to go. One day two of these boys decided they would go into the horse business. They found a bunch of mustangs about five miles south of the Beaver River and started trying to walk them down. After the third day of it they got tired of such a slow way and after shoving the bunch into a small deep canyon, then made a run on them. Each roped a horse, both stallions about four years old, and of all the fun they had in tying and side lining those ponies. Before we reached the end of our journey they were well enough broken that the wrangler could handle them without side lines.

We crossed the Beaver at the mouth of Sharp Creek and headed north for the Cimarron and on to Dodge City where we were met by the owner of the herd. We held the herd on the Arkansas River for a few days, waiting for cars. After loading the cattle we made the trip

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back with the wagon and horses, as they had been hired from an old Spanish rancher down on the border by Collins. He had purchased this herd from an old Spaniard to be delivered at a ranch at least fifty miles from the Mexican border, as about one half of them had been run across the border by rustlers and sold on this side at prices ranging from \$3.00 to \$5.00 a head for grown cattle.

After delivering the outfit back to the Troquitto Ranch on the Texas side I crossed back into Mexico where I had been making my headquarters for a short time, and stayed there most of the time for the following year. I came out in the Fall of 1887 and wintered in Amarillo, Texas, driving stage for T. B. Clisbee from Amarillo to Plainview, a distance of a hundred miles. I drove this stage from September until March, then returned to Mexico.

I have seen all the cattle country there is between the Rio Grande and the Yellowstone and have never seen as good all around cow country as No-Man's Land was fifty years ago.

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I returned to the Panhandle in the Spring of 1890 but did not file until 1894.

In the late summer of 1890 I hired out to F. C. Shoemaker and stayed there until the late Spring of 1892 when I returned to Mexico to work for the Bell Cattle Company. I stayed there until 1893 when I came back to the Strip and filed on a claim in 1894.

I was married in 1894 at Beaver City, the only county seat in the entire Strip. I worked on various ranches until 1900 when I moved to my present home near Optima where I have farmed and kept a small herd of cattle since that time.