

LOVELL, J. I. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

9608

424

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

Field Worker's name Linnaeus B. Ranck

This report made on (date) December 29, 1937

1. Name Mrs. J. I. Lovell

2. Post Office Address Gage, Oklahoma.

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

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year 1861

5. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

6. Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

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 5.

Linnaeus B. Ranck,  
Investigator.  
December 23, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. J. I. Lovell  
Gage, Oklahoma.  
Born 1861.

Mrs. Lovell is a native of the state of Missouri. With her husband and children she drove from Clark County, Kansas, to No-Man's-Land in 1887 and squatted near its southeast corner. Their first dwelling was a one-room sod house. Their furniture consisted of one bedstead, a home-made table, a few chairs and a stove. Soon they had a well dug which was sixty feet deep. It was the first one in the country around them for many miles. There were many settlers in No-Man's-Land then and they came from a radius of a number of miles to get water at the Lovell well.

The Lovells were only two miles from the old Ivanhoe post office. At that time there was a store at Ivanhoe, also a saloon. Ivanhoe then was a "sod house town." The mail to Ivanhoe came over the Star Route from Englewood, Kansas. They did most of their trading at Higgins, Texas, however, since it had just started on the new railroad. Higgins was about thirty-five miles distant. Usually the round trip required from three to four days.

LOVELL, J. I. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

9608.

- 2 -

The Lovells did little farming. They sought only to raise enough feed for their stock. Drouth made this impossible some years. One year they had forty acres of Indian corn planted and they ate the entire crop of roasting ears one day for dinner. The fodder they cut for the winter.

Like many other pioneers of western Oklahoma the Lovells found gathering buffalo bones a dependable though limited source of cash income. Mr. Lovell and the children drove over the prairies of No Man's Land and gathered up many loads of bones. A good portion of the bones were those of buffaloes.

The buffalo bones were easily distinguishable by the shape of the head and the horns. Occasionally they would come upon the skeletons of as many as thirty or forty buffaloes within a comparatively small radius. This plainly indicated to them that such a place was where early-day hunters had attacked a large buffalo herd and succeeded in killing many before the beasts scattered and fled. Lovells hauled these buffalo bones to Higgins and they brought, as a rule, \$8.00 per ton to \$10.00 per ton. Other oldtimers sometimes found that about \$5.00 per ton was the usual price for buffalo bones in this quarter of the country during those early days.

LOVELL, J..I. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

9608.

- 3 -

The Lovell family developed quite a herd of milk cows which they managed to have provide a cash income for the family amounting to considerable eventually and they made "tons" of butter and cheese during those early days and sold them. Mr. Lovell made regular trips to Higgins and Fort Supply with the butter and cheese which they had made. At these two points they found a ready market for it. As a rule they got from 10 to 15 cents per pound for these products.

There were several children in the family who reached school age during the first few years and there was no school to send them to. Mr. and Mrs. Lovell, therefore, taught their children at home for several years. By the time the territory was organized -1890- and schools could have been established, No-Man's-Land had become so depopulated that schools could not be organized and established. Drouth and privations and other hardships caused an exodus of most all of the settlers and before the turn of the century practically all of old No-Man's-Land had reverted to the cowmen.

LOVELL, J. I. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

9808.

- 4 -

According to Mrs. Lovell conditions in No-Man 's-Land before it became Oklahoma Territory were orderly considering the fact there was no constituted Governmental authority.

There was claim jumping more or less; but seldom ever was a settler who remained on his claim disturbed or molested.

The country was a rendezvous for many desperate and lawless characters but the Vigilance Committees dealt so summarily and often harshly with such offenders that their disturbing influence was held in remarkable abeyance.

After several years the Lovells moved their center of activities to another location about six miles north and into the more broken land in order to have better shelter for their increasing herd of cattle. Here they built a three room sod house, the largest anywhere in the country, and covered it with a shingle roof. Their home then became quite a social center. They used to have many dances and people would come from as far distant as twenty-five miles to attend. As a rule these dances meant all night frolics and most of those foregathered would return home the day following. On this second location in No-Man's-Land Mr. Lovell made legal filing at Woodward after the United States Land Office was established there.

LOVELL, J. I. (MRS).

INTERVIEW.

9608.

- 5 -

By 1900 the Lovells had developed a ranch of some proportions and were running four hundred and fifty head of cattle. That year they traded a hundred and twenty head of cattle for the one and only hotel in the sprawling little new town of Gage, left their ranch and assumed management and operation of this hotel.

Mr. and Mrs. Lovell operated this hotel for about twenty years following. Mr. Lovell died a few years ago. Mrs. Lovell still lives in Gage.