

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Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.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For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.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.

INDEX CARDS

Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians

Kiowa

Food--Kiowa

Chisholm Trail

Custer, George A.

Horse thieves--stealing from Indians

Law enforcement--Federal

Dances--Messiah

Openings--Cherokee Strip

Openings--Pottawatomie

Openings--repeaters

Openings--Kiowa-Comanche

BLAKE, E. E. INTERVIEW.

364

Field Worker: Harry M. Dreyer
April 1, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mr. E. E. Blake (White)
2915 Classen Avenue
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

BORN Crown City, Gallipese Co., Ohio,
1877.

PARENTS Father, Born in Ohio
Mother, born in Paul Church, Va.

I, E. E. Blake, was born in Crown City, Gillipsee County, Ohio. I came to Kansas by rail in 1889, came into Oklahoma to El Reno, in 1890.

I met a good number of Indians in early days around El Reno, Oklahoma. Roman Nose and Cut Nose were prominent in those days, Cut Nose received this name from Scar on his nose, that he received in the Civil War. He was an Indian Agent at Fort Reno at that time. There were such Indians as Deffy Curtis, a blind Indian, prominent in negotiations and treaties with tribes. It is said the way he happened to be blind was that after the Custer fight and all the white men were killed, he threw ground glass into his eyes, so that he could not see any white men any more.

There was, also, an Indian squaw that was also blind. They learned to communicate with each other by touch on the arm. She could hear, but he could not. There were other prominent Indians as Red Moon, Night Killer. We gave a celebration for the Indians in 1890 and 1891, invited them in. There were about 3,000 Indians in all that came to El Reno. We gave them steers to feast on. We turned a steer loose to let them kill it with their bow and arrows. So several of the Indians chased the steer with their ponies, and shot him full of arrows, but for some reason did not kill the steer. The steer charged back into the crowd and ran through the Indian camping grounds, knocking down their pots, tepees, carts, tents, frightening the Indians so, I never heard so much squalling of children in my life. They say an Indian child never cries but they certainly did that time. There was a negro standing near by the edge of the crowd, and as the steer came his way he shot it with a pistol.

I was clerk for while with Court, and we went on a Circuit, held court at various counties and came in contact with good many people.

There was a group of Kiowa Indians came up to El Reno, from around Kiowa and Hobart country with out anything to eat and one of the Kiowas, a bright young Kiowa, said they found a dead cow on the way. They cut it open and found a calf on the inside, so they ate the calf for their supper. They brought their costumes along. Some were comedians in the crowd and they put on a show in El Reno.

The Chisholm trail of which many are confused, there were two trails, a wagon trail and a cattle trail. The wagon trail started south of Waurika, Oklahoma, came to Rush Springs, then on to the Washita river and cross the river at Rock crossing, at Chickasha, an north across the south Canadian at Yukon, cross north Canadian one mile west of Yukon. Then around Caddo Springs, Bison north of Hennessey, then Enid, Round Pon, now Pon Creek, then into Kansas through Caldwell, on up to Abilene, Kansas, the shipping point at that time.

The Cattle trail was parallel with the wagon trail along where Rock Island railroad is approximately on the west line, across south Canadian at Big

Jokes crossing. Trail was four or five miles wide. Perhaps five to ten thousand cattle would move along the trail and then another herd would follow, however, spread out as they were herded north. This was the trail used up until 1892. But after 1889 they began to go through Cheyenne County, beginning south of Altus, along up toward Sayre, Meridian lake and on up over old trail to Abilene, Kansas. This was the first shipping point, cattle that were not shipped from that point were driven on up through Nebraska and Wyoming. As the cattle men moved west, Dodge City became the shipping point of cattle for market. The early days after the Civil War was the approximate time the cattle men began bringing up their cattle from Texas and grazing over what is the Chickasaw country before settlement.

There were scouts with Custer, as Morrison, Jack Stillwell, Thompson; and outlaws such as the Dalton boys (whose home was few miles south of Kingfisher), Red Buck and Coyote Kid. The Kid was later sentenced for murder and sent to the penitentiary.

There was a horse trader who came into the country and made a deal to get mare ponies from the Indians, which he did. He built a fence out around Calument, and put ponies in there and was going to share the increase of colts with the Indians. Later, the Indians could not find the horses. Upon complaint and investigation it was discovered that the trader had taken the horses ^{out} of the pasture and shipped them out of the country and sold them. He split with the agent the profits. I was clerk of the court then. The Indian sat at trial and did not say anything for nearly all day, but finally spoke up and said, "Somehow agent lost plan."

Coyote Kid was convicted for killing a U. S. Marshal. Al Jennings's father was defending him and said he was not responsible because of too much freedom at large on the prairie and that he had tuberculosis. The Judge spoke up and said, "Sorry you have tuberculosis on the prairie, they have good doctors at the penitentiary. I will give you ten years." He traveled around the country in cavalcade, transportation furnished by the Army. We were gone on

Circuit some times for three months at a time.

Fert Reno was built in about 1866, and around 1870 an early post trader by the name of Neal Evans from Philadelphia, who had a trading post there, was burned out by the Indians.

In the early days we had Mr. Sneed, Straus and Abernathy and Mr. Craig of Anadarko, all prominent in early Oklahoma politics. Also Wade was an early cattle buyer in Oklahoma.

The Kiowa Indians in early days before the opening of any parts of Oklahoma made a raid down into Texas, on the wood cutters and haulers. They butchered the women and children. It is said that the Kiowas threw the small children up into the air, and let them fall down into point of a butcher knife, torturing them in this manner as they killed them.

Other disturbances among Indians were when some agitators got among the Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapchoes. They began holding their Messiah dances. It was a legend that the country would be covered with a wave of mud. This was in 1888 or 1889. They began to gather up around Calumet, Oklahoma, where they held

BLAKE, E. E. INTERVIEW.

P/7

370

their dances, and where they danced from 24 to 36 hours at a time, or until they were worn out, or until they fell by fainting. Others would keep on dancing and paid no attention to those lying on the ground. They danced in a circle to the right clockwise, very compact, with a space in the center of the circle, where drum beaters and pedal beaters sat. Some among the crowd chanted songs, while some of the more agile of the group danced by themselves in single file within the circle, holding one arm high into the air, which they continued so long as they danced. Those who fainted and fell to the ground usually died, and they believed the Great Spirit had taken them.

While others who fell from exhaustion and who finally came to, claimed they had seen the Great Spirit and they conceived the idea that they should wipe out the lives of all the white people. Additional troops were brought into Fort Reno around this time. Oklahoma City people became very much alarmed over the situation. Usually they were on guard near Lake Overholser awaiting the Indians

when they arrived to make their attack. Soldiers and citizens at El Reno were on guard out west of El Reno to prevent any hostilities. However, upon one occasion when there was a marriage and charivari celebration, Oklahoma City inhabitants were very much alarmed that certain Indians were coming to the City.

I made the run into the Cheyenne Country from Cloud Chief, but when I arrived the whole country was taken. You could not ride a horse over that country as fast as you could drive an ox team and wagon.

I made the run into the Strip. I cut down a carriage, and had a body built on front wheels and drove into the Strip. All that I had to eat was a little dried beef that I took along. Had no water to drink, as I made the run from Hannessey. As I staked a claim, a fellow drove upon us and nearly ran over us and said, as he pointed a Winchester at us, that he was there first. So I said, "I guess you were." I finally staked a place and got into Enid next night and got water.

In the Pettawatomie opening I rode a beautiful black pony. I had a rope for a saddle, as something to hold on to, as I was not a good rider. We made the run from the banks of the river not far from Shawnee. The river was full of horses and was about

two feet deep. There must have been a hundred thousand at the opening. I began to feel a little uneasy before the shot was fired signaling to go, as the crowd back of us kept crowding, and this made it dangerous so that we were easily apt to get hurt, as many were injured in the runs by others running into them, or other mishaps.

After the run, there was not a drop of water left in the river. It had all been thrown out of the stream by horses running across it.

I also made the run in the Tecumseh opening; there was about as large a crowd there as the Pottawatomie opening. U. S. Marshal Smith was killed in the opening. He had a fine saddle horse and was a good rider, but his horse fell on top of him. The horse's feet were up in the air and he was pinned underneath. As I was back of Marshal Smith, pushed by the crowd, my horse in the excitement jumped over his horse. He was struck in the face and was killed.

In the opening of the Kiowa and Apache at Tomonica, the opening was by lottery. The tickets were drawn by a little girl, out of a box.

There must have been a hundred thousand there; I have a picture of the drawing.

The rivers and tanks were drank dry of water.

While waiting for the drawing someone started religious services. They began singing songs, songs like, "Gather at the River," and all of the crowd joined in the singing. Their voices echoed up and down the river. There probably had never been such a crowd of people joined together and singing; certainly was beautiful.

In what is known as No man's land, there was a good deal of corn, kaffir and pop corn raised and made into liquor. The people out there would deliver liquor and Deer meat to people in Southern Kansas. Kansas was dry then. The liquor was given the name of white mule, which it was usually called. So in Strip opening before the run, some one shouted "Oh Joe, here is your mule," an expression used for notifying him that he had his liquor for him. So the entire crowd joined in and word was passed down the line, the words were, "Oh Joe, here is your mule."

There were good many people killed in the openings, some in disputes over property. Dead man's crossing

on West 10th Street got its name because of a murdered man found there. And in Caddo county, south of Hydro, where a woman was found dead, the place was called Dead Man's Canyon. Also around Mustang there were a good many killings. Several were tried and convicted for those murders.

I have continued to live here and make my home, after coming into Oklahoma.