

HANLEY, AMINDA LATTA.

INTERVIEW

9463

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

Field Worker's name Linnaeus B. Ranck.

This report made on (date) December 2, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Aminda Latta Hanley,

2. Post Office Address Fargo, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1869.

5. Place of birth Park Hill Mission, Cherokee Nation

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

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 Four.

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Linnaeus B. Ranck,
Investigator.
December 2, 1937.

Interview with Aminda Latta Hanley,
Fargo, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Hanley was born at the old Park Hill Mission in the Cherokee Nation in 1869. Her mother was a teacher in the Mission School for many years, having come from the state of New York to Park Hill during the 1850's. At this old Indian mission Mrs. Hanley's mother was married. The eminent John Ross was principal chief of the Cherokees at the time and took a prominent part in the ceremony giving the bride, Mrs. Hanley's mother, in marriage.

Mrs. Hanley's father was from the South and served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. Her mother, then with three small children, and a number of negro slaves belonging to her father, lived in Fort Smith, Arkansas, for the greater part of the War's duration. Conditions in Fort Smith became very lawless and the mother of Mrs. Hanley was advised by friends of the family to flee from the country and return to New York

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with her small children. Night on end, Mrs. Hanley's mother and another white woman alternated sitting through the nights at the door of their dwelling in Fort Smith, a gun in hand, ready to repulse the desperate characters who threatened untoward action. Mrs. Hanley's mother had ample Confederate money but she could not pay passage out of the country with it and so had advised her friends who were urging her to flee for the safety of herself and her little children.

One morning, however, she found underneath her door an envelope containing \$300.00 in United States currency which she presumed had been secretly placed there during the preceding night by friends expressly for her to use in paying her way back to her people in New York State. With her children she departed immediately, boarding a steamboat on the river at Fort Smith for the first lap of her long journey. The father survived the war and the family was reunited at Park Hill afterwards.

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For some time the Cherokee tribal laws forbade white children attending the established Indian schools of the Cherokee Nation. Therefore, school facilities for Mrs. Hanley and her brothers and sisters, also for other white children then resident in the Cherokee Nation became quite a pressing problem. During this period the family of Mrs. Hanley lived in the once spacious home in the Cherokee country of Mr. Murrell, who was a son-in-law of the venerable Chief John Ross. A number of other white families in the community prevailed upon Mrs. Hanley's mother to hold a subscription school in her home which she did, receiving \$2.00 per month per child for her services.

In the meantime Robert L. Owen, a part Cherokee himself, and destined to become one of Oklahoma's first United States Senators, came to the Cherokee Nation, taught in the tribal schools and became active in Cherokee politics. Owen, after repeated failures, finally got through the Cherokee legislative bodies and enacted into the nation's

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tribal laws a measure providing for the admission of white children residing in the nation to the Cherokee established schools.

Mrs. Hanley now has in her possession a small hand bell which her mother used in 1857 in the Park Hill Mission School " to call the little Cherokees in with". She wishes to give this memento of early-day history in the Cherokee Nation to the Oklahoma Historical Society.

Mr. Hanley, the husband of Aminda Latta Hanley, came to the Cherokee Nation in 1882.