

HODGE, MINNIE

INTERVIEWS.

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Interview with Minnie Hodge
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Investigator - W. T. Holland
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I am a native of Arkansas, having been born near Van Buren, on May 18, 1877. My father, Charles Wimberley, was born in Illinois. My mother, Fain Pauley Wimberley, was a native of Indiana.

My parents came into the Territory in 1879, when I was two years old, by way of Elgin, Kansas, where we lived about one year. My father brought us here in a covered wagon drawn by oxen, (near Avant, now).

Father was in the timber business and used oxen to haul logs to the sawmill. Rough lumber was being used then for building, as a few sawmills were scattered about; in fact, they moved from place to place and sawed lumber for the public. My father hauled a great deal of the timber to the sawmills and hauled the lumber away.

During the five years we lived up there my father also freighted goods into Bartlesville, our other trading post, from Cherryvale and Coffeyville, Kansas.

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On these trips he usually rode his pony and drove the oxen from the pony. He said this was easier on him than riding on his wagon.

For about five years, we lived in a tent, as we moved from place to place. The last year we were up near Avant, Father built a one-room log house and we lived in that. He built a lean-to, but we used it to hang and smoke meat. We had a dirt floor and of course, board roof. But practically all houses in that community were log houses at that time, and most of them had dirt floors.

We moved to Tulsa in 1884 and have lived here since.

In 1893 I was married to John N. Hodge, an Indian, Cherokee and Creek.

My father continued to do hauling and freighting after we came to Tulsa. I remember, I think it was in 1897, when Tulsa had its first big Fourth of July celebration, a great deal of preparation was made and one part of the parade was a team of oxen, consisting of thirteen yoke, which my father drove. They were hitched to a log wagon on which a platform had

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been built; this platform was about 10 x 16 feet.

A bevy of girls and the musicians were on this float. My daughter, I think, has a picture taken of this team.

After my marriage I lived northwest of Tulsa about where Sand Springs now is. At that time (1890), it was only an Indian village.

My husband and I, as well as others, were members of the first Sunday School in that section. Dr. Lamb, a Presbyterian Missionary, organized it for us. He visited us from time to time and preached for us, too. The house which we used now stands. It is on the main road from Tulsa to Sand Springs, right in the edge of Sand Springs, near the greenhouse. It was then, and still is, a residence, but most all religious services of that time were held in the homes of the people.

I, being married to an Indian, attended the dances and various other celebrations.

One of the most interesting was the Shawnee War dance. These were held at their stomping grounds near the falls of Hominy Creek (this isn't the Spybuck ground).

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At this point Hominy Creek and Bird Creek were about one mile apart. The Indians would go over on Bird Creek and put on their war paint and get ready for the battle. When ready, they would come across the prairie on ponies, yelling or otherwise acting their part. This celebration lasted three days usually and often ended in a sure enough fight. I know one time there were four killed; two officers and two civilians. The last day there was a good deal of drinking and, too, the Indians were tired and ill and it didn't take much to start a fight. We took our own food and camped through the celebration.

At the feasts and dances of the Creeks they used a table on which to spread their food, while the Cherokees usually spread their feasts on cloths on the ground.

With the exception of the Shawnee War Dance, all other celebrations were orderly, about as much so as those of the white men.

In Tulsa Mrs. ~~Lilah~~ Lindsey and Mrs. Stonecipher were teachers at the mission Indian school in Tulsa.

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This building where I attended was about where the Cosdon Building now is, Fourth and Boston; but the grounds, which were fenced, covered perhaps twenty acres or more.

One early peace officer here was Uncle Will Burgess, who was chief of police of the Cherokees. He was proud of the position and had a good looking uniform. It was blue serge and the pants had a white stripe down the outside seam.

The Creek Indians had the light horse brigade, officers of the peace.

In that day, the nineties, practically all the outlaws were Indians. The Dalton brothers who were originally peace officers were later outlaws.

I could tell of a battle here between the Indian outlaws and the light horse officers. During the day the outlaws hid themselves on Stand Pipe Hill, north of town, where they fired during the day, but that night brought the fight right down into Tulsa. My father witnessed a part of the fight. He saw them shoot the hat of Chief George Perryman off his head.

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My husband's people originally had all the land in what is northwest Tulsa and known as Brady Heights, but the allotments of my children were near Broken Arrow.

I could tell, and probably should, about the way we lost lots of our land in and near Tulsa, but it would probably do no good now.