

HANSEN, CAROLINE.

INTERVIEW

10117

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

Field Worker's name Bessie L. Thomas

This report made on (date) February 25 193a

1. Name Caroline Hansen

2. Post Office Address 409 Columbia Avenue, Lawton, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

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

5. Place of birth _____

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 4.

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Bessie L. Thomss
Investigator
February 25, 1938.

Interview with Caroline Hansen
409 Columbia Avenue
Lawton, Oklahoma.

When very young I came from my home across the seas with my parents to make a home in America. I remember the fearful dread and yet the great longing to make this adventure. After I reached America I found most of the fear had been useless.

I have lived most of the time since I came to America in Oklahoma. I am an '89er. I was still quite young when in September 1893, I went to the Strip opening where the run was being made for homes. My brother and I were among the very fortunate, both making the "Run" and staking claims. Later, after proving up, I went to Grant County and there met and was married to an Oklahoma homesteader.

My husband was a well driller, as well as a farmer. In his work of drilling, he met a Mr. H. E. Diehl. Later, in 1899, Mr. Diehl urged us to go with him to the Kiowa-Comanche reservation which was to be opened in 1901. Everyone in our community was talking about it, and predicting it would make a wonderful country under the care of the white man. So, we decided to go

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to this newest opening and took the road, or trail, by the way of Anadarko and if we liked it there we planned to come back to that place to make our home. Three covered wagons drawn by good stout horses, brought our goods to this country. I had a good stout covered buggy and a hardy, fast travelling pony, which I drove all the way from Grant County to the edge of the new townsite via Anadarko, which place we did not like so we came on to the tent city around the new townsite of Lawton. As we came to the tent city, it was not hard to recognize the Boomer tents for we had seen it all twice before.

Immediately after the lot sale, at which we purchased some lots, Mr. Diehl began putting up a business building, he also began shortly building a residence, one of the first good-sized rooming houses in the city. It is in the 100 block on A Avenue. We built it well and strong and it is still standing and in fairly good condition. It is nearly always rented and still contributes to my livelihood, now that I am a widow. We lived in a little shack while the house was being built. The plaster was not yet dry on our new house and Mr. Diehl's hardware store was just being finished and he was getting a nice trade, it began to seem that all our anxiety was over. Then one night a terrible fire broke out on

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E. Avenue and traveled with a strong wind right towards our property. We thought our home would be burned, there didn't seem any way to save it. My husband owned some big water tanks in which he hauled water to Mr. Diehl's building. He had just filled one so he brought that to the house and we used the water to fight the fire with, fighting it away from our home with wet gunny sacks and blankets. We threshed fire for a long time before we felt our home was safe.

I remember a big prairie fire later, which threatened our home, but we were not living in it then. Everyone in town would always turn out and help neighbors and friends when fire threatened homes, or business buildings.

At first I did not feel very happy about coming to this unsettled country, as I had already pioneered in two strip openings, but all of America seemed like pioneering to me, and once torn away from our homestead and on the way, the pioneer spirit was again strong, it will always be so with me. I would pioneer again, if occasion came up to ^{make} it necessary. I remember the dusty, dry weather, the hot summer of 1901, the small whirlwinds crossing the plains as we came along and things did not look so

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well. I admired the beauty of the prairies but I wasn't so anxious to stay on them. After we reached the boomer city and put up our tent I did not mind it so much, then when we began building our home and helping others to build, I forgot to be "grouchy" about the new country and began to like it, Lawton especially and our house. I forgot all the hardships, and as I had always loved America, the love grew deeper in this new country of the plains.

There was a man who gave Mr. Sim Sheppard an alligator perhaps four feet long, which he kept in a pool of water. About that time there was to be held a county fair, so the people were surprised to hear a speaker in front of one of the tents saying: "See the only albino crocodile in the world". When they went in, there was the crocodile which had been given a coat of white paint. Sim was to get fifty per cent of the money taken in, and his share turned out to be about \$40.00.