

LIENEMAN, PETER T. SECOND INTERVIEW

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

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Field Worker's name Linnaeus B. Ranck

This report made on (date) November 17 1937

1. Name Peter T. Lienemen

2. Post Office Address May, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 15 Year 1876

5. Place of birth Fort Dodge, Kansas.

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 8.

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Linnaeus B. Ranck,
Investigator,
November 17, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. Lieneman,
May, Oklahoma.

On April 5, 1895, Mr. Lieneman's father went from Fort Supply to Woodward and filed a homestead entry on a claim on Otter Creek in the north central part of what is now Ellis County. Mr. Lieneman distinctly remembers that the most disastrous snow storm ever visiting this country during his more than fifty-six years residence in this section came April 5, 1895, and continued thru April 6th and 7th. There was at least a foot and a half of snow all over the country when the storm abated on April the 7th. This storm ruined many cowmen of those days in this region. That was the storm that spelled doom for the old H. Steeple Ranch, then a mammoth cow outfit operating in these parts. Lieneman claims that late February and March of 1895 had been most open and mild. Grass had made such a good start already that grazing on the lower lands was very good by April 5th of that year. The weather had been warm and cattle had shed most of their winter coat of hair.

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The storm that came April 5th of that year started with rain, but soon turned to snow, got freezing cold and raged for three days. Cattle perished on the ranges by the thousands. For destruction to stock this was the most disastrous storm ever experienced in this country and other old timers in substance have told me as much.

The big Government freighting outfit of Lee and Reynolds had built a mammoth blacksmith shop at Fort Supply during the latter '70's entirely of cedar logs, set picket style. They had cut all the timber for this structure from the cedar breaks in the country adjacent to the Fort. When these freighters for the Government suspended operations and the old post was abandoned, Mr. Lieneman's father bought the Lee & Reynolds shop-building for \$100.00, wrecked it and load by load hauled it to their homestead, west of the old fort on Otter Creek. There they rebuilt it in much the original style into a combined dwelling and barn 40 x 24 ft. in dimensions. The Lienemans had a special and particular object in combining their horse barn with their dwelling, for in those

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days, horse stealing in these parts was all too common; and it was highly organized, too, on the part of some bands of renegades who carried on such forays. There were well organized gangs operating on a sort of a chain or relay plan. One small group would steal a horse or horses and make his way rapidly out of the country to some rather distant and remote hideout where a small group of Confederates would meet them and hustle the stolen horses on to another remote rendezvous etc. With a well organized band working in such manner it was next to impossible to recover the horses stolen by such a gang. The Lienemans owned some good horses when they settled on Otter Creek in 1895 and built their house and barn combined under one roof as a measure of safety against horse thieves.

The Lieneman homestead was situated in the heart of the vast and once famous H. Steeple Ranch. It is a notable coincidence, too, that their picket house and barn were constructed over the very path of one of the famous old cattle trails from Texas to Kansas, the trail that crossed Red River at Doan's Store and came on north through the Kiowa-Comanche

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and Cheyenne-Arapaho Reservations. About a mile south of the location of their old picket house the trail came in from the south and east from the breaks and divided east of Otter Creek, crossed to the west bottom and thence went north along the west banks of Otter and over the very spot where Lieneman's father built his homestead house-barn in 1895. Where the old trail left the bluffs in its course across Otter Creek there remains to this day very noticeable evidences of it; the same is true of a certain place in the landscape about a mile northwest of the old Lieneman Homestead.

In 1897 Mr. Lieneman homesteaded along Otter Creek just south of his father's claim. At the present time, however, he lives on his father's old homestead, and it is a very notable fact, too, that he still occupies the old cedar picket dwelling the family built in 1895. This old house still in a remarkably good state of preservation, is one of the landmarks of this section of Oklahoma and has a most unique historical background. During Lieneman's days at Fort Supply

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a vast amount of hay was put up every year on the Military reservation to feed the Government horses and mules. All the work was done by civilians on contracts let by the Government. Certain specifications were stipulated by the letter as to the height, width and length of stacks etc. Mr. Lieneman took part in those extensive hay-making operations. The greater part of the team work was done by oxen and Lieneman became a very good "bull skinner." During a hay-making season of the late '30's Mr. Lieneman and a man of the name of Roselle left Fort Supply one morning with a five yoke bull-team hitched to a huge and sturdy wagon, bound for the canyon country twelve or fifteen miles northeast of the Fort to cut out and haul back a big load of a certain kind of poles which they found most suitable for use in putting up hay around the Military post. It was the plan of Lieneman and Roselle to be away one night only and to be back at the Fort with their load by the evening of the second day. They knew there would be no water for the ox teams in the locality where they expected to cut their load

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of poles; nevertheless, they calculated to let the animals do without water until they got back to the Fort, which they believed surely would be the next day following the day of their departure. Hence they took no water with them for the ox teams to drink. Lieneman chained the ox teams to trees the first night out but two yoke or four oxen, nevertheless, got loose during the night and wandered away. The time spent in an unsuccessful search for these oxen on the morning following so delayed the work of cutting poles that they did not finish their load and get started back to the Fort till the morning of their third day away and the oxen were still without water.

On the north side of Beaver Creek close to the Fort floodwaters had washed out quite a large and deep hole along the bank away from the stream's current. This body of back water was eight to ten feet deep in some places and was near the trail over which Lieneman and Moselle would return to the Fort with their load of poles. Lieneman was in charge of the oxen and wagon-load of poles when they reached the

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immediate vicinity of the big pond of back-water. While still some distance away the oxen smelled the water and, though drawing a heavy load, they started in a frantic dash for it to quench their extreme thirst. Mr. Lieneman sought in vain to control the outfit but they left the road and plunged down over a high sand bank into the water, pulling the load of poles down with them. Lieneman followed and was obliged to swim out. Some of the oxen nearly drowned and the poles floated off the wagon. Roselle arrived and reprimanded Lieneman sharply. When they finally got the oxen and wagon out of the water the entire outfit bogged down in the quicksand, making it necessary to unhitch the animals and leave the wagon for the time being.

From Woodward some thirty miles distant Mr. Lieneman hauled all of their supplies for several years after locating on the Otter Creek homestead in 1895. Their nearest neighbor lived five miles away. Until after the turn of the century they did comparatively little farming. Limitless range was free and they depended largely on raising

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livestock for a livelihood. They used to gather up bones and haul them to Woodward and the bones usually brought about \$5.00 per ton. John J. Carlach, an early day banker of Woodward, extended credit to Mr. Lieneman's father to the extent of about \$1600.00, enabling them to carry over the hard years of the middle and late '90's. In the meantime they accumulated quite a bunch of cattle and horses, grazing them on the free range of the surrounding country.