

LIENEMAN, P. T.

FOURTH INTERVIEW

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

LIENEMAN, P. T. FOURTH INTERVIEW.

Field worker's name Linnaeus B. RanckThis report made on (date) January 28, 19281. This legend was
received from (name) P. T. Lieneman.Address May, Oklahoma.This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story Lieneman's personal recollec-
tion of early day history of this section.3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank
sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets
attached _____

An Interview with P. T. Lieneman, May, Oklahoma.
By - Linnaeus B. Ranok, Investigator.
January 28, 1938.

A GREAT AND DESTRUCTIVE PRAIRIE
FIRE OF EARLY-DAY NORTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA.

It was the late fall of about 1885 or '86 that a destructive and extensive prairie fire raged in to Fort Supply one afternoon from the southwest. The stage drivers from Fort Supply to Fort Elliott later reported to the people at Fort Supply that the fire started in the vicinity of Fort Elliott.

It was observed for several days before it reached Fort Supply and the people were hoping that a change of the wind in time would turn it in a direction away from the Fort. All available troops and civilians at the Fort were called out to fight its advance and guard post property. By the time it reached the post locality the wind had gone down some, otherwise likely the stacks of government hay would have been lost. The wood pile beside the post hospital caught fire from the rolling and flying sparks and embers. The soldiers were out with wagon loads of barrels filled with water several hours before the fire reached the post

using the water to help control backfires they were running around the post buildings, haystacks, etc., for protection. A lot of Indians who were in camp east of the Fort-site proper broke camp and moved to the north bottoms of the Beaver some time before the fire reached the post area.

A changing wind drove the fire southeast from the Fort, across Wolf Creek and on southeast. The North Canadian River kept the fire from spreading east beyond the course of this stream. A military telegraph and telephone line then connected Fort Supply and Cantonment, some sixty miles to the southeast. The next afternoon the fire had reached the Cantonment country as reported back to Fort Supply over the wire.

Southeast of Fort Supply a number of miles happened to be camped a family consisting of the husband, wife and three children enroute to the Texas Panhandle when this fire swept in on them. Their covered wagon was near a water hole. It was night when the fire struck them according to the account given by the husband, who survived and came to the Fort for help. The man directed his wife and children to take shelter in the pond of water

as he went for the team nearby to bring them to the pond, too, for protection. The mother and children for some unknown reason went in the wrong direction and all were burned to death. The surviving husband came to Fort Supply the next day for help. Mr. Lieneman's father made coffins for the woman and children and the soldiers brought them to the Fort for burial in the post cemetery.

Afterward it was discovered that hundreds and hundreds of range cattle perished in the fire, as well as many antelope, range horses, etc. The dead animals were found in bunches in low places where they had gathered and were overtaken by the fire.

A few years after the Strip opened an eccentric settler, by the name of Moss, living on his claim a few miles northwest of the present town of Gage, deliberately set fire to the prairie grass saying that he was curious to see what a big prairie fire was like. A south wind drove the fire north to Beaver Creek where it stopped and other settlers and cowboys turned out and kept it from spreading very much east or west. The fire did considerable damage, burning some cattle on the H. Steeple Ranch. The H. Steeple foreman, Billy Daniels, had

not been on the best terms with Mr. Moss and after Daniels learned how the fire got started he, along with others, was in favor of dealing harsh punishment to Moss. The latter fled the country in haste, however, and did not show up again in these parts for some time and until after the feeling against him had subsided.