

LOOKABAUGH, E. H.

INTERVIEW

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

LOOKABAUGH, E. H.

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10422.

Field Worker's name Augusta H. Custer.

This report made on (date) April 8, 1938

1. Name E. H. Lookabaugh

2. Post Office Address Watonga, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 421 N. Prouty Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 16, Year 1871.

5. Place of birth Atchinson County, Kansas.

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth Ohio

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth Ohio

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 _____

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Augusta H. Custer,
Investigator
April 8, 1938.

Interview with E. H. Lookabaugh.
Watonga, Oklahoma.
Born December 16, 1871.

I came to Oklahoma from Eastern Kansas in 1898, with my brother Ira. I had three brothers but we sort of paired off. I always slept with Ira when we were small boys and we always worked together. Later, when we were grown, Ira went to Kansas University and graduated as a Law student, I was graduated from the same school. Later we married sisters. My other two brothers also married women who were sisters. These two brothers were both farmers, while Ira and I were more contented in town and in the law business and politics. When Ira and I came to the Cherokee Strip, I got a claim three quarters of a mile east of Waukomis. I proved up on the place and as soon as it was clear in title I sold it for \$800.00 to a lady named Smith. A man of the name of O. J. Flemming contested the ownership of the claim but I beat him in the suit, and then sold the claim. On this claim I built a half dugout. The top part was of boards and had a sod roof. It did not leak

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when it did not rain but sod when lapped like shingles was pretty good to turn rain. I dug down on this claim and about eighteen inches down I found a red soil. This I thought proved that the top soil was not very deep and that the land was not much good. I had been accustomed to the deep black soil of Kansas. I was back in the Cherokee Strip a few years ago and bought some gasoline. I thought that I was close to the old place of mine and when I asked about the ownership of the place the man that sold me the gas said that he had bought it for \$16,000.00. If I had just been far-sighted enough in those early days I could have bought dresses trimmed with elk teeth from the Indians for \$1.50 each. Wonderful blankets could be had for a plug of tobacco. The Indians loved to live in camps. They did not like to go and stay on their allotments. It was much more fun for them to be close together. There was a big Indian camp at Lefthand's Place, one at Darlington, another at Cantonment, one at Seiling etc. The Indians held many more ceremonial dances then than they do now.

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It was quite a sight to start in and go from one camp to another. The Government men would buy perhaps fifty head of cattle and drive them down among the Indian camps. They might give one to an old Indian with several sons and daughters living near him. The Indians would get on their ponies and would "take in" after ^{the} animal, shooting it with arrows much the same as they had done with buffalo. When they had it killed they would catch the blood, skin the animal and cut it up. Then they would drag the pieces of meat through the blood and have the meat covered. They would stretch the meat and hang it in the trees or on a line in the sun to dry. They would eat everything but the undigested food in the stomach or pouch. The intestines were the first things they would eat. The liver was always eaten raw. I had a nice young cow that died of black leg. My hired man told me that he thought she was going to die, and sure enough she did. I went out to the farm intending to haul the carcass away but there was nothing there but the inside of the pouch. I asked where the carcass was and the man said "Indians carried it away."

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When a prize hog of mine got sick, the Indians would know it was dead almost before I would and would be there ready to take it away.

The negroes located in settlements west of Greenfield, I have ridden out there many times and there would be no house in sight but if you would yell or shoot, kinky heads would appear from almost nowhere. The negroes lived in dugouts, level with the ground.

In 1895 I used my right and filed on a claim in Arapaho Township. I lived there long enough to prove up on the place. It was while I was out here that Ruckman was killed by a negro and a Mexican. This old man Ruckman would go into Kansas every fall to get fruit to can. This Mexican and the negro were with him. He made the remark that he had been the owner of slaves who were of more account than these two men. They did not like this remark, and when they camped that evening he was unhitching the team, and had part of the harness off when one of them took the neck yoke and struck Ruckman, killing him. The two of them ran away and hid in an old dugout. There was a small opening where the stone

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pipe had been put through. The officers were after these men. The Mexican was smaller and got through the hole and escaped while the negro was caught in the dugout. The men took him to the jail in Watonga. Then a mob gathered and they were well organized. They had a long pole and rammed the door down, took the negro to a large cottonwood tree and hanged him near Monett Springs, Kansas.

There was a funny incident which happened at that time; when the mob was at the jail Senator Woodruff was at the eating house where we all could see the mob and we were all very much excited and Senator Woodruff was smoking a pipe that was shaped like a small revolver. He took the pipe out of his mouth and we went down to the jail. He was still carrying the pipe in his hand by the stem and this bowl resembled a gun. A man of the party said to him, "Senator put that gun down". He said, "Oh, that aint no gun, it aint no gun, it is a pipe," and he hastened to prove that what he said was the truth.

I have seen Watonga grow from a town of tents and shacks to what it is today. There have been some exciting times in this old town, and there are still some very unusual and interesting things taking place.