

WOOD, N. W.

INTERVIEW

1413

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

Field Worker's name Merrill A. NelsonThis report made on (date) October 4, 19371. Name N. H. Wood2. Post Office Address Oklahoma, Oklahoma a.3. Residence address (or location) One block north of bank.4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 8 Year 18605. Place of birth Alden, Illinois6. Name of Father James Wood Place of birth OhioOther information about father Good Blacksmith7. Name of Mother Eva L. Groesbeck Place of birth Schenectady
New YorkOther information about mother School teacher

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 .

Merrill A. Nelson,
Interviewer
October 4, 1937

Interview with N. W. Wood,
Lahoma, Oklahoma

I was born in Illinois in 1860. In 1877, I attended the college at Naperville, Illinois, two terms. Later, my parents moved to Kansas. My ancestors were Hollanders.

I came to Oklahoma first from Ottawa, Kansas, in 1891. I came to Oklahoma City on the train to see how I would like the country. I decided I would be satisfied as I liked the new land with its fine soil and good crops and felt it would be a privilege to pioneer here. Soon after this, I was on my way again from Kansas to my new home. I came alone from Wellington, Kansas, to Orlando. I saw hardly a single white man in all that distance. There were plenty of Indians, but they did not speak. Blankets and breech clouts were all they wore. At Ponca City there were some Poncas, also some members of the Kaw and other tribes. I also saw a few Indians near Red Rock, in Noble County, but I do not know of what tribe they were.

I built a frame house on arriving at Oklahoma City and went into the "oil" business in 1891-92. I had a good business selling kerosene for lamps and stoves and gas-

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oline for stationary engines. In 1893 I sold out the oil business, which was independent of any corporation, and cleared about \$400.00. Soon after, September 16, I made the run. We had no definite idea of the country and it was so level, there was little choice anyway, it seemed. I made the race from ten or twelve miles west of Hennessey. There were about six in our gang who made the run together, D. H. Roose, Dick Binding, Jim O'Connell, Carl and Will Carr and I. All but Jim O'Connell got claims. My place was the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 19, Township 22, Range 8 West.

I built a frame house and started ploughing. In three years I had broken about 100 acres. My wife came shortly after I staked my claim.

Lahoma started in a dugout as a post office on Swanson's school quarter. This was Section 36, Township 23, Range 9. Then the post office moved one-half mile west where it stayed six months. Then back to the original location until April, 1901, when the railroad came through here, then it was moved into the present Lahoma. They then moved it southeast two miles. Even before the rail-

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road, Lahoma had two general stores, a lumber yard, a livery barn, meat shop, blacksmith shop, a harness shop and a drug store. Once in a while a big windstorm came through. There was a real cyclone in Hillsdale about 1897.

The settlers who came were of various nationalities, perhaps a few more Germans than others. There was also a sprinkling of Bohemians.

As to churches you could take your choice. There were Methodists, Christians, Lutherans and the Church of God.

I slept on the bare ground four or five nights after I staked my claim. Then, after making a dugout, I went to Hennessey, returning in a covered wagon. I later built a frame house. That first year I broke about thirty acres. I proved up on this homestead and gradually brought 100 acres into cultivation. I hired a well dug and waited. The first three years there were no crops. We had success with corn in those days but now we cannot raise it as the hot winds start up when they go to ploughing and it burns the corn out.

The railroad bought the present site from Shroyer

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who had the original filing to the townsite of Lahoma. I sold my farm in 1901 and rented a building. I have been on this corner ever since. However, I had a frame building at first. Now I carry a wide variety of household supplies, drugs and farm tools. My first building here was not as large as my present store but business was almost as good if not better in those early days. I used to sell earloads of furniture. Houses and barns were being built and paint and all kinds of equipment were needed.

There were no epidemics here in the early days; the only one I remember is the flu during the World War.

We still have our home we built in 1901. One night I slept with some United States Marshals in Oklahoma City. There was a livery stable and over that was the only place we could find rooms; so with the marshals. They left early the next morning. This was Heck Thomas and his deputies.

About the most stock I ever had on my place was eight head of horses and a dozen head of cattle. In those early days I raised mostly wheat, corn, Kaffir

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corn and Castor beans. These last are easy to raise. You cultivate them when knee high, and then they shade the ground and kill the weeds.

There were several newspapers in Lahoma. These were the Lahoma News and the Garfield County News, which moved to Enid and is still running. I never did mix much in politics but I vote Democratic if they have the right man.

We have four children. Ray is the oldest. He and Paul are electrical engineers. One has a job with Westinghouse. Sam is at Corry's Pharmacy, Enid. He and Paul were in the army. My daughter is working in the Commissioner's office in Oklahoma City.