

MITCHELL, E. (DR.)

INTERVIEW

10140

409

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma #10140

MITCHELL, E.. (Dr). INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Ophelia D. Vestal

This report made on (date) February 28, 1938

1. Name Dr. E. Mitchell

2. Post Office Address Lawton, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

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

5. Place of birth Indiana.

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 _____.

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An Interview with Doctor E. Mitchell, Lawton, Okla.

By - Ophelia D. Vestal, Investigator

February 28, 1938.

Living in Southern Indiana in 1901, I had a fire which burned everything I had. There had been quite a lot in the papers about there being another opening in Oklahoma soon. After having been burned out I had to start from the bottom, so I decided I would start a new business in a new country. I watched the papers for registration dates - then started. I told my wife that soon as I got located I would send for her. In my suit case I had a box of food prepared by my wife and mother, a few clothes and about \$7.00 in silver, five \$20.00 bills, about \$5.00 worth of drugs and a set of instruments for minor operations, also a few smaller things in my possession.

I went to Kentucky buying my ticket at Louisville. The agent said the ticket would cost \$26.00. Then he said, "There are lots of people going to that new country, Oklahoma, why don't you try to get ten persons to go for \$18.00 a piece. If you could get that many, I'd give you your ticket". Well, I thought that was my chance and I started out hunting people to go to Oklahoma.

I interested six persons and it seemed that six were all I could get. Then I went back and told the agent that there was nothing doing; I had to get ten or no free ticket. I started out, then said, "Well, I can go another way". When I got to the door he said, "Say fellow, I guess you win". I then got my free ride, coming to El Reno.

Arriving at El Reno after noon, I thought of my box of food and with one of the men of my group, went to a lumber yard, sat down in the shade of a big tree and ^{we} ate our dinner. After resting awhile I started looking for a room for the night, not thinking of sleeping out/ ^{though} I had a blanket in my suit case, I finally located a room on a third floor for \$3.50. I took the room and thought I would smother that night. There were so many people in El Reno that night that they made one think of a large herd of cattle.

I came to Anadarko in July of 1901. A man had just started a tent rooming house, putting three large tents together, and by buying a cot and some bed-clothes I was able to sleep there for \$1.50 a night. Until the townsite was opened the morning of August 6th as everyone knows, people

were making camp near the townsite. The townsite was in a corn field.

Soon a sign painter came along and I had a doctor's sign painted on a piece of muslin and put it up in front of the tent. It wasn't a half hour until I was on my way making my first call to see a sick man. One morning before daybreak, a man rode up to my tent, asking me to come see a very sick man. I had to ride an Indian spotted pony but being in such a hurry and riding real fast, all at once my horse stopped still and a man came out of the tall grass with a gun. He wanted to know what I meant. I told him I was a doctor on a call to see a man who was sick. Then he said, "You came very near getting shot, for we are a company of ten soldiers sent here on guard". He directed me to ride south and then westward and by doing this I found the sick man's home, but I let my pony walk the rest of the way, and I stayed with the sick man until daylight.

The people living through these pioneer days can well remember the scarcity of water, the awful dust and the meals we got at little restaurants. People couldn't very well

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#10140

4

have baths until finally a man started a bath-house. In his wash tub he poured four buckets of water and the charges were twenty-five cents a bath.

My first home in Anadarko was a two-room house to which I added a room at a time.