

INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH HOUSTON HOPKINS
1203 Texas Ave., Woodward, Oklahoma
Alson J. Chase, Field Worker
May 18, 1937

Joseph Houston Hopkins was born in Iowa in 1863. Later went to South Dakota. In 1882 he left South Dakota, and went to Canadian, Hemphill County, Texas.

He says: "I punched cattle in Oklahoma and Texas from 1882 to 1887, at which time our closest shipping point was Kiowa, Kansas, and we drove the cattle there to be shipped, our route taking us across the Northwest part of Oklahoma."

"When the Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation came in for settlement, I made the run on horse back and staked a claim, about two miles northwest of the present town of Cheyenne, on what was known as the Custer Battle grounds. Here is where Custer had a battle with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes."

"I later sold this claim and in 1898 came to Woodward, Oklahoma, and bought an interest in the Gerlach Brothers Mercantile, and the name of the firm was changed to Gerlach-Hopkins Mercantile Company. I was made manager of the new concern, and continued as such until we closed out in 1926. I served as mayor of Woodward, Oklahoma, from 1909 until 1911.

Under the Theodore Roosevelt administration as President of the United States, there was an attempt made to move the

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Federal Land Office from Woodward to Alva, Oklahoma, and the town of Woodward made Mr. Hopkins a member of a delegation to go to Washington, D. C., to try to make arrangements with the Washington officials to keep the Federal Land Office at Woodward, and their mission to Washington was accomplished.

"When I came there in 1898 Woodward did not have a water system and the well water was not fit for house use, so we had to haul water from a well south of town, in barrels for our home use. I was made Postmaster in 1932 and served until 1937. I am still a resident of the town of Woodward."

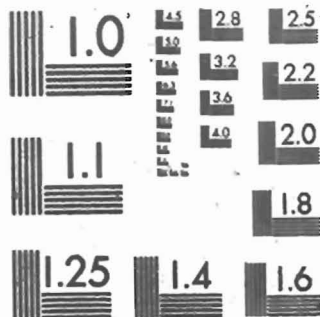
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