

MITCHELL, DICK

INTERVIEW

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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for OklahomaField Worker's name Manda M. FinkThis report made on (date) July 12 19371. Name Mr. Dick Mitchell2. Post Office Address Arapaho, Okla

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 30 Year 18815. Place of birth Clay County, Mo.6. Name of Father G. W. Mitchell Place of birth Lexington, Mo. Near
Lexington at Grand River.
Other information about father Practiced law and President of College.7. Name of Mother Josephine S. Harris Place of birth Kentucky

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 _____.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. DICK MITCHELL
Maude M. Fink, Field Worker
July 12, 1937

The newspaper, Arapaho Bee, was established April 29, 1892, ten days after the country was opened up for settlement. Mr. J. W. Lawton and Mr. Fillmore were the first to establish it. The Arapaho Bee was first known as the Arapaho Arrow, but in six months it was the Arapaho Bee. The paper now is volume forty-six, number ten on July 9, 1937.

Mr. Fillmore sold out to Mr. Lawton in six months, and Mr. Lawton ran it until his death in 1927. The next editor was Henry McCullough, then editor F. L. Kyle, then Mr. Dick Mitchell, who is the present owner.

Mr. Mitchell has been the editor of several papers at different places. He published a paper at Grand, Oklahoma, the County Seat of old Day County. (After statehood Day County was eliminated and the north half is now part of Ellis County, and the south half is the north part of Roger Mills County). He also published papers in Roger Mills County, Cheyenne, Elk City, Sayre, Clinton and is now editor of the Arapaho Bee at Arapaho, Oklahoma.

An Indian Uprising at Cheyenne

A cowboy crossed the county line from Texas and got

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drunk. His father had been with General Custer so this cowboy hated the Indians. He told the boys in Cheyenne he was going to kill a certain Indian. The cowboy pointed this Indian out to the other boys and some of the merchants in Cheyenne went to the Indian and told him to get out of town. He got on his horse and left town, but the cowboy saw him as he went over the hill and followed him. He shot the Indian, killing him. The sheriff, Skiletty Bill, arrested the cowboy and put him in jail. All the Indians from Washita came to Cheyenne. By the next day more than four hundred Indians had come into Cheyenne and demanded the prisoner. They built a big bonfire and got switches, and danced around the fire. They whipped the ground, and pew-wowed all day and night. Finally Judge Casady was permitted by the chief to speak and talk to the Indians. He persuaded the Indians to allow the white man's court to try the white man. He told the Indians that the white man would be sent to the penitentiary or hanged.

The cowboy was tried at El Reno, a hundred miles east of Arapaho. All the men and boys were furnished guns and the women and children were sent to Texas be-

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fore the trial. The judge was an old ranger from Texas. The cowboy was acquitted, and this made the Indians angry.

The Indians used to do all their trading at Cheyenne but after this happened they hardly ever went there.

Just after Statehood there was prohibition in Oklahoma, as it was written in the constitution. It was already against the law to sell an Indian liquor. Chief Little Wolfe was in the habit of taking on too much "Constitutional Water," so the state officer or the city police arrested Little Wolfe for being drunk. They held court of inquiry in hopes of finding out who sold the liquor to Little Wolfe, and a negro was arrested on suspicion and tried.

They called Little Wolfe to the witness stand, and he sat down in a chair with his feet under him, Indian fashion. They kept asking him who sold him "fire water". He answered through an interpreter, "maybe a black man". The County Attorney proceeded to ask leading questions, describing the negro. He asked if he had a scar on his face, big thick lips, and so on, with Little Wolfe answering in the affirmative until he discovered he was

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about to convict the negro. Then speaking in English Little Wolfe, said "Maybe so one eye," and there was not a one-eyed negro in the country, so the accused negro came clear.

Little Wolfe made a speech in Congress, when they were trying to get an Indian school established at Kingfisher. Little Wolfe lived at Clinton, and he told them it was not any further for the children to come from Kingfisher to Clinton than it was for Clinton children to go to Kingfisher.

The Antelope Hills in north Roger Mills County rise to an elevation of from three to four hundred feet, and the peaks are of sandstone, giving the appearance from a distance of being covered with snow. These hills served as land marks for the Indians, early day buffalo hunters, adventurers, Indian traders and the '49ers who moved across the Cherokee Strip, enroute to California.

Discovery of gold in California brought great wagon trains across the plains, and the southern route of the Santa Fe Trail followed closely the present Santa Fe main line railroad from Kiowa, Kansas, down through Woods, Woodward and Ellis Counties. In passing over the

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the southern Santa Fe Trail the soldiers and emigrants could sight the Antelope Hills to the south for a hundred miles from the high divide over which they passed on into New Mexico.

Many of the expeditions that explored the western plains moved over the southern Santa Fe route. In north Ellis County, the trail is still visible at points.

The Antelope Hills can be seen for a long distance on a clear day, and to the west of the hills, just a few miles the treacherous South Canadian River winds its way to the southeast.

The Hills proved to be a valuable land mark for General Custer and his army as they marched from Fort Supply, in Woodward County, crossing the South Canadian, and moving on to the Washita River, where Custer attacked Chief Black Kettle and his band of Cheyenne warriors on a bleak November morning in 1868. Black Kettle and his tribe of warriors were almost annihilated and Captain Hamilton and nineteen enlisted men were killed.

A BURIED GOLD LEGEND

About 1902, there appeared a Mexican at Grand, the County Seat of what was then Day County, Oklahoma

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Territory. He had with him a crude map of the country, showing the South Canadian River, the Washita, and the Antelope Hills. The Mexican related to some of the early settlers adjacent to the Hills that an early day battle was fought near the Hills between the Cheyennes and a party of Mexicans who were moving toward Missouri with a shipment of gold. The entire band of Mexicans were killed in the battle, with the exception of his father, he said and the survivor buried the gold in the hills. Forced to leave without the gold, he drew a map locating as near as he could the buried gold. The father of this Mexican had died several years before the son came to the country and attempted to locate the lost treasure.

For months, the Mexican excavated the Hills, but if he ever discovered the buried treasure he never let that fact be known. However, during his months of excavating he unearthed several skeletons which seemed to bear out his contention that in an early day a battle was fought near the Hills. The pioneers adjacent to the Antelope Hills have long believed the buried treasure legend.

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About 1902, an early settler, Lee Thrasher, excavating in the Hills, unearthed an iron pot which gave some light and more evidence of buried treasure. Inside the pot was a small iron kettle. Deposited on the bottom of the iron kettle was some gold dust. It is possible that the Indians found the treasure, took the gold and tossed the iron pot and kettle into one of the deep canyons on the side of the hill, and erosion covered the pot and kettle.

Even as late as 1920, people have made extensive excavations in the Antelope Hills, entertaining hopes of discovering a buried treasure.