

INDEX CARDS:

Opening-1889
Holdenville
Creek Nation
Weleetka Town site
Creek Ball Games
Nnyaka
Green Corn Dance
Emhaka Mission

CATLETT, NORA. INTERVIEW.

- 8 -

Amelia Harris,
Field Worker

Form A-(S-149)

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

3694412

Field Worker's name Amelia F. Harris,

This report made on (date) June 15 1937

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

1. Name Mrs. (Nora) H. B. Catlett,

2. Post Office Address Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 226 N.W. 13th Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 2 Year 1867.

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father John W. Newlon Place of birth Illinois.

Other information about father Served in Civil War.

7. Name of Mother Elizabeth (Taylor) Newlon Place of birth Indiana.

Other information about mother Dead.

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 4.

CATLETT, NORA. INTERVIEW.

Amelia Harris,
Field Worker.

370

An Interview With Mrs. Nora
Catlett, 226 N.W. 13th St.,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

We became very much interested in the Indian Territory after the run of 1889. The papers were so full of thrilling adventures, and wonderful opportunities that my husband could think or talk of nothing else but to come west. I finally gave my consent and we sold our farm of 240 acres, chartered a car and packed in our household goods, also a brood sow, chickens, turkeys, a span of horses and a surrey, five bushels of Irish potatoes, turnips, and worlds of canned and dried fruit. We came all the way on a train.

We had friends who came in 1889 and were making their home in Holdenville, so we stopped in Holdenville, too, rented a five-room cottage, and moved in to it until we could decide on our permanent home. We hadn't been there long when my husband and others opened up the townsite of Weleetka on part of the allotment of Martha Lowes, a Creek Indian. He then stretched a tent for the first bank in Weleetka, and he carried his money down to it in an old telescope bag. (This bag is usually made of canvas with the top and bottom of the same depth. The top slips or telescopes over the bottom, with straps buckled.

around it to hold it secure). He kept the money in this tent and transacted business over a table until he got a box house built in about three days. In this house he had a crude cashier's window and a cash box. The following year a nice brick bank was built with modern improvements. This bank was called The First National Bank of Weleetka. We also built a nice two-story frame house with a bath room. We had a wind mill and over ground tank for our water works, as the town was not "modern". We moved all our things over from Holdenville to Weleetka-well satisfied with our new home.

From the beginning our family entered whole heartedly into the spiritual and social activities of the town. We never missed Sunday School or Church. We always kept our lantern trimmed and filled with coal oil to guide us to church at night as we did not have electric lights until several years later. Society consisted of box suppers or pie socials to help reduce the church debts, and picnics on the banks of the Canadian, which was a mile from the city limits. Our largest assembly would be on Sunday excepting to Creek Indian Ball games. I have witnessed many of these games.

Great preparation had been made for a game to be played on a hill near Weleetka between the Creeks and

Nuykas. The Nuykas were a band of Indians that always rode ponies single file-the Creeks walked. That Sunday was hot. We went early in order to drive our surrey up close to enjoy the game. The Creeks were there waiting. The participants wore only a breech clout. Their chests and faces were painted in bright colors. Some of the others wore trousers. Others high up or chiefs had full regalia, head bonnets and everything. Everybody was waiting for the Nuykas to come and start the game. Presently they came riding single file in all picturesque regalia. The head men entered into a conversation and then other Indians gathered around. All at once they started fighting with their ball sticks. I never saw such beatings as they gave each other. They were a bloody bunch. The Indian women got buckets of water and as soon as one was knocked out they would bathe his face and wounds. There were a thousand or more white people gathered to see the game, but when the fight started, you never saw such a scramble among the white folks to get away from there, we among the rest.

An annual event was the green corn dance, dancing in a circle around a big fire to the time of the tom toms and rattle gourds (filled with small rocks) with beads and shells hung around their knees. This event lasted

four or five days, and they would have big feasts along with the dance. They were usually dressed with long trousers and moccasins, no shirts, and big white hats with a feather in it. The Chiefs wore the war bonnets. These were Creek Indians and Willie Brown, full-blood, was one of the leaders in this dance. The women participated also and always wore gaily colored dresses with three or four shades of ribbons hung from their shoulders to the hem of the dress.

There was an Indian school called Emahaka Mission. It was built by the Presbyterians and later taken over by the Baptists. The Creek Indians near Weleetka went to school there.

Outside of the Indians our lives were uneventful. We tried to be good citizens and did our share of charity work.