

CONNARD, BILL.

INTERVIEW

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

Field Worker's name Ophelia D. Vestal

This report made on (date) March 3 1938

1. Name Bill Connard

2. Post Office Address 613 Park Avenue

3. Residence address (or location) Lawton, Oklahoma

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

5. Place of birth Texas.

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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Ophelia D. Vestal
Investigator
March 3, 1938

Interview with Bill Connard,
613 Park Avenue,
Lawton, Oklahoma.

I came from Johnson County when the opening of this country was in its very young days. Being a pretty good sized boy I remember quite a bit of the conditions here. Where the cattlemen had to ford Cache Creek was about two miles south of Lawton, and this became quite a well traveled road by early people here.

The Indians drew the attention of many white people, and me especially. I wasn't afraid of the Indians and tried to learn their language but I soon found it was a bigger job than I thought. I have seen Geronimo ride into town on his spotted pony bringing his bow and arrow. People would put a nickle on a post and tell Geronimo to shoot it off. Most every time he hit the nickle, causing it to fall to the ground. When he did knock the nickle to the ground it belonged to him. I have heard many people say that Geronimo was very quiet in his young days until some troops went down in Texas killing his mother, wife and children, and burning the home. Then he started to killing people, remarking he

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had his ninety-ninth scalp and was looking for the one-hundredth one. But he was good while being held at Fort Sill.

The history of Signal Mountain, given to me by an old settler, was that when the Indians were here riding this country in the bareback days, before they knew of saddles, they were pretty much to notice and watch for white people. A few white people would be traveling through, but they didn't get far because the Indians would scalp them. In case the Indians had heard or knew of any trouble over the country, they would hang some kind of a torch on a limb of a tree in the direction of the trouble, from the little house they had erected on top of the mountain for the watchers to stay in; this mountain being called "Signal Mountain."

There is a gravel road leading from the old post to Post Field that is known as the old Geronimo road.

I used to have a great old Indian friend who lived south of town a few miles. His name was Incy to me. He said he used to be with Geronimo's tribe but he ran away and had lived alone in the woods for a long time. He has

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told me when Indians would be going through the woods and see a certain bird or animal they called that trail or road from the object they saw. In case a crow happened to have been seen, they would mark that spot, road or trail as "Crow trail".

One mile south and three miles west of town(Lawton) there is a grave of a cowboy in the corner of that pasture. I was told not many years ago of that grave, as I drove out there to see if I could find it. I did find it very easily. The history of this grave seems to be that years ago, before the country was ever thought of being settled, about three hundred head of cattle were being driven through here to the Kansas City market. Near this grave was a big spring where the cowboys always watered and rested the cattle.(As for today there is no sign of this spring) While holding the cattle here some Indians came up on the boys and killed one, the others getting away. After the Indians had gone, the cowboys came back and buried their friend.