

4

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Bureau

197

Field Worker's name Robert W. Small

This report made on (Date) December 28 1917

- 1. Name Ira Edwards
- 2. Post Office Address Ponca City, Oklahoma
- 3. Residence address (or location) 1102 South Eighth
- 4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 1 Year 1868
- 5. Place of birth New York

- 6. Name of Father E. S. Edwards Place of birth New York
- 7. Name of Mother Susan Underwood Edwards Place of birth New York.

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 5.

EDWARDS, IRA.

INTERVIEW.

198
9561

Robert W. Small
Investigator
December 28, 1937.

Interview with Ira Edwards
1102 S. Eighth, Ponca City,
Oklahoma.

I was born in the state of New York, October 1, 1868. I came from New York to the state of Kansas and settled near Arkansas City, from which place I frequently visited the Indian country. For three summers prior to the Opening of the Cherokee Outlet I cut hay and shipped out to other points where there was a good market for it. After the Opening, in 1894, I made a trade with the Ponca Indians for 1,000 acres of grass on their reservation just north of the White Eagle Agency; this contract with the Indians had the approval of the Indian Agent which was necessary to make it legal.

I made the Run when the Sac and Fox country was opened to settlement; I made the race on horseback from Perkins to a place about twenty miles north of Chandler, but failed to find a claim that appealed to me so returned home.

At the Opening of the Cherokee Outlet I again made the Run from Chilocco to the country several miles south and when I reached that section I found that men had run into that section from the Osage country and had every claim taken. Many

2

men contested those who made the Run from the Osage country, claiming that it was not legal to run from that country but when these cases reached the Supreme Court the original claimants won out and all contestants lost. I never filed any contest myself but the next day after the Run I went to a quarter-section of land that was to become the townsite of Cross and staked two lots, or rather placed stakes on two different locations, as many others were doing. The land was to be surveyed and platted into a townsite and the lots having stakes on them after they were surveyed should become the property of the one placing the stake on them, by paying the filing fee and any other legal charges.

It developed that, after the land was surveyed, some men had placed their stakes on land that was platted as streets and consequently lost out.

I built houses on my lots, one of which was used as a feed store where I conducted a successful feed business for about two years. The town of Cross soon became a flourishing little village, having a bank, grocery and dry goods stores, hardware and ~~the~~ stores, blacksmith shops, hotels, two or three saloons and a post office was soon

EDWARDS, IRA.

INTERVIEW.

9561

3

established; also, there were livery barns and other businesses of various kinds. The Santa Fe Railroad had a switch there and a small station house and the town became the trading center of a rich agricultural community. However, before the seasons became favorable for abundant crops of grain in the country a townsite movement had sprung up at Ponca City, just one mile south of Cross, and the promoters of the Ponca City townsite prevailed upon the railroad company to move their depot to Ponca City, which they did. The promoters also offered the business men of Cross a lot in Ponca City free of cost if they would move and many of them accepted the trade, although somewhat reluctantly. Others held on to the town of Cross and refused to move; I was not in sympathy with the move and stayed with Cross. Before the Ponca City townsite fight began I could have sold my lots for \$1,000.00 but a short time after ^{so} many had left Cross and moved to Ponca City that I couldn't sell the lots for \$25.00.

I next turned my attention to land and farming; I bought out the relinquishment on a quarter-section, the S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 32, Township 27 North, Range 2 East, which had

EDWARDS, IRA.

INTERVIEW.

9561

4

a small house built upon it and was all fenced. There was also a good well of water and some minor improvements and twenty acres had been sown to wheat, for all of which I paid \$700.00. I proved up on this land later and sold it, then bought the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 35, adjoining my old place which land I still own.

Business men in the town of Cross, during its early existence, were almost compelled to extend credit to their customers at frequent intervals because of crop failures the first few years. People in the early period of settlement in this country required but little in the way of necessities; they were not accustomed to luxuries. They could barely make enough to live on in the most economical manner and they only bought what they needed to live on. They would pay when they could get the money to pay with as a rule, though there were a few who would evade payment of any debt as long as they could and really made no effort to pay.

There were very few criminal offenses committed in the country in the early days. People lived peaceably and

quietly and the most of them were determined to succeed in making a success on their farms and in building up the country as they later did.

It exacted a degree of heroism at times but the pioneers redoubled their efforts in every farming activity, built better homes, big barns and granaries, schools and churches, laid out new roads and in every way possible made advancement and progress.

In 1919 I moved to Ponca City and bought eighty acres of land immediately south of the city and laid out and plat-
ted the same into town lots now known as the Edwards Addition.