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ENGLE, MARY E.

INTERVIEW

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Lawrence Hibbs
Field worker
April 20, 1937

An interview with Mrs. Mary E. Engle
1706 South St. Louis Street

LIFE OF HER FATHER, FRANK GILLETTE

My father was born in Ohio and later came to Kansas. My mother was born in Ireland and came to this country when just a girl. Her maiden name was Anna Foster Brown. She and my father met and married at Hutchinson, Reno County, Kansas, in 1867.

My father helped to build the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad through Indian Territory to Denison, Texas. Mr. Gillette's uncle, a Mr. Riske, had the contract to build the railroad and my father worked for him. My father had charge of the Commissary and equipment and feed for the mules.

My father and mother married in 1867 and lived at Hutchinson, Kansas, and my father went out from there to work with his uncle on the construction of the M. K. & T. Railroad. The summer of 1868 they were camped at Lime Stone Gap near Atoka and mother came down and spent the summer with father and lived at the camp. Near this camp was a fine spring of water and the cowboys and Indians from all around would come there to get water and my

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mother was terribly afraid. She expected to be scalped most any day by the Indians.

One day while living at the camp my mother went to the spring to get some water and she left her little baby lying on the bed in the tent and when she got back there were about twenty wild hogs in the tent where the baby was lying on the bed. She was so frightened she thought there were a hundred of them and of course she knew her baby would be killed, but when she came up the hogs ran away and as they did she threw an axe at them and it hit one of them and of course it bled but it kept on going and then she thought that when the Indians found the blood they would follow it back and kill her for sure, but of course nothing of this kind happened.

At the close of the summer of 1868, my mother went back to Hutchinson, Kansas, but my father stayed on until the road was completed into Denison, Texas. Mr. Gillette had a brother on this job by the name of Charles. He contracted typhoid fever while on this work and died and was buried at Denison. My father finished his work and came back to Hutchinson in about 1874, and remained there until the time when he moved to Indian Territory.

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After my father came back to Hutchinson he entered the grocery business and while conducting his business he studied law; later he moved to Kingman, Kingman County, Kansas, and there he passed the bar examination and was admitted to the bar in 1879. While living at Kingman he was elected and served both in the House of Representatives and the Senate, serving in these capacities for twelve or fifteen years. While in the Senate, Charles Curtis was his page boy, and of course Charles Curtis later became Vice-President of the United States..

My father later became attorney for Charlie Colcord of Kansas and his work with him involved legal matters both in Kansas and Indian territory. Mr. Colcord later moved to Indian territory and considerable history has been written about him.

My father formed the bill that was passed into law that broke up the Beef Trust in Kansas and was the Chairman of the Anti-beef trust convention of States at St. Louis. This was in 1889.

My father's first trip into Indian territory was in 1892. He came to Kingfisher to represent W. D. Rossett in regard to some lots in the townsite of this town. His second trip was

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made in 1893 at which time he filed on some land in Canadian County. They of course had to live on the land to prove up their claim. He later moved back to El Reno and was living there when Theodore Roosevelt, then President of the United States, appointed him to federal Judgeship at the towns of Hobart, Anadarko, and Lawton. This was about 1901 and he served about seven years on the federal bench or until statehood. One of the decisions he made while on the bench at Lawton was to destroy all the whiskey and saloon equipment in Lawton and to clean up the town. They called this the twenty thousand dollar fire as that is what they set the figure at as the cost of the property destroyed. We lived in Anadarko during the time my father was federal Judge; after that time we moved back to El Reno. This was about 1901. My father died in El Reno in 1929, and mother in 1932.

My father always spelled his last name Gillett before he was appointed to Federal Judge, but when President Roosevelt appointed him he spelled his name Gillette in his appointment so my father always spelled it that way from then on.

My father's brother, Guy Gillette, was Postmaster at Hennessey,

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but later became Court Clerk for my father at Hobart. While Guy Gillette lived at Hennessey, his half-brother, Don Gillette, lived with him and made the run into the strip. He made this run on a pony that had been given to my brother Charles by J. J. Strickland of Kingman, Kansas, and was brought with the family to El Reno. He filed on a piece of ground where Enid now stands. In fact the railroad shops at Enid are located on a part of this claim. This was in 1893.

I was born in Hutchinson, Kansas, in 1875 and moved to Indian Territory with my parents. While living at El Reno, I met and married Charles Engle, in 1896. Mr. Engle came to El Reno from Kansas arriving the day that Grover Cleveland was inaugurated, March 4, 1893. He clerked in the bank at El Reno when he first came there. My husband is now engaged in the insurance business here in Tulsa. We have lived here about five years.