

INDEX CARDS

Shawnee
Saloons--Oklahoma Territory
Social gatherings--Oklahoma Territory
Dances--Shawnee
Dances--Caddo
Clothes--Shawnee
Clothes--Caddo

Field Worker: Amelia F. Harris
April 12, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mrs. Elia Evans
 maiden name Elia Blevins
 1106 East Park Place
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

BORN August 1879
 Illinois

PARENTS Father, T. J. Blevins, Illinois
 Did not come to Oklahoma
 Mother, Mary Blevins, Illinois
 Deceased

Mr. ^{Evans} Blevins came to Oklahoma in 1901, in advance, to look for a good location to start some kind of business. He had heard so much of the great possibilities of the west especially in Oklahoma but it was with fear and trembling that I bade him good bye. Way down deep in my heart I thought it would be the last time I would ever see him again. I almost knew that the Indians would scalp him.

He spent about ten days enroute and looking for a location before he wrote home. My nights and days were filled with horrible nightmares until he received a letter from him, posted at Shawnee, Oklahoma

Imagine my surprise on reading the letter, of my husband's frequent reference to the Indians and that they seemed friendly and not on the war path at all.

My husband returned and he packed our belongings and shipped them by freight to Shawnee, Oklahoma. We landed in Shawnee in April 1901. Rented a brick building on the main street and started our grocery store. The Shawnee Indians that I had feared so much were some of our best customers. We rented our first home and lived

there for four years. Then we bought a nice two story home and lived there until my husband's death.

About every other business house in Shawnee, was a saloon. Selling liquor to the Indians was prohibited, yet they seemed to get it any way, but they never molested any one; we were living in Shawnee when the saloons were closed. We kept our store open until 12 o'clock and sold candles to the saloons. The streets and saloons were crowded, people buying whisky and storing it away. They acted as if they would never get another chance to ever buy whiskey again. All of the liquor that was left in the saloons after 12 o'clock that night, the officers took out and spilled, complying with the law.

We had fine schools and churches and good soft water. Splendid health. Our amusements were ^{the} "silent picture"; The 101 Ranch show and Rodeo which came every year; and the celebration of statehood and the Cheyenne and Arapaho drawing. We attended part of the ceremony in August of the Green Corn Feast or dance. This celebration usually lasted about three days. The first day, we attended and it seemed to be a thanksgiving day to these Caddo and Shawnee Indians. As the feast was opened with prayer by the Chief. This ceremony seemed to be very sacred and was unlike any gathering I ever saw. There was a big square of ground cleaned off and a fire built in the center. The bucks were gaily decked with war paint, feathers, some in native costume, others had short buckskin jackets and breeches on, or blankets wrapped around them. The women had gay colored dresses and bright colored shawls of various hues and strand after strand of bright colored beads around their

necks and gold ear rings in their ears and shell combs in their hair. Some of the younger women had their hair braided down their backs. The men had their hair wrapped and hanging down on the sides of their shoulders. Their hair was long, too, and they had small gourds cleaned out and filled with small stones, these gourds were hung about their person some way. When they danced the gourds would make a noise. After the prayer, the backs and the squares assembled around the fire in a circle, and began a weird chanting in their native tongue, accompanied by the Tom-Toms, the rattling of the gourds, and chanting; then they would have a big feast.

Barbecued meat, bread and different kind of Indian dishes. I think this ceremony lasted three days and each day was different. The days had different meanings,

We were very busy in our grocery store and only attended part of the first day, as we had heard so much of this same old event

that we could not resist watching them. Then we enjoyed Benson Park a beautiful, wooded place about half way between Shawnee and Tecumseh. There was a nice pavillion, a rustic porch, lake for skating in the winter time. Electric cars run out there several times a day. There was a nice writing station. We made good money in Shawnee and were happy and thankful we came to Oklahoma.