

MOONEY, DAN.

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INTERVIEW
ETHNOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Ethnic History

Field Worker's name Robert W. Small

This report made on (date) December 24, 1937

1. Name Dan Mooney

2. Post Office Address Ponca City, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 202 S. 5th Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day _____ Year 1857

5. Place of birth Toronto, Canada

6. Name of Father Peter Mooney Place of birth Ireland

7. Name of Mother Margaret Duggan Mooney Place of birth Canada

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 1

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Investigator, Robert W. Small
December 24, 1937

Interview with Dan Mooney
Ponca City, Oklahoma.

I was born near Toronto, Canada, in April, 1867. Prior to the Opening of the Cherokee Strip, I lived in Nebraska. I came for the Run on September 16, 1893, and made the race but failed to get a claim.

I never became discouraged by not getting a claim in the new country; I had become familiar with pioneer life in Nebraska. I liked the Indian country and I secured a lease on some school land near the present site of Ponca City and lived in a little house about 10 x 12 feet on the lease. I had always been accustomed to hard work and I set out to make enough money to buy some land.

I was a man of good physical stature, strong and healthy.

The first few years after the opening of the Cherokee Outlet were very unfavorable to the farmers generally because of a lack of moisture for growing crops at the critical stages of maturity, but I never felt grieved or

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became disheartened over crop failure or other similar circumstances or conditions.

I sold over \$4,000.00 worth of wheat from one crop I raised in the late nineties. In addition to my farming activities I engaged in the livery business at the old town of Cross, which was a thriving young town at that time and was situated near the present site of Ponca City.

Opportunities in every field of endeavor were to be found all over the new country in the early years after settlement; it didn't require a vast sum of money or a technical knowledge to engage in any business or undertaking. The customs of the early period did not require such exacting details in the conduct of any kind of business. The people were all of one kind - the common, the good kind. The minister could preach a sermon in his blue denim overalls and shirt sleeves, without thought or fear of criticism. The school ma'am could and did wear calico dresses that cost from 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ to 5¢ per yard and heavy cowhide shoes that cost around \$1.00 a pair and heavy black cotton hose that cost 10¢ a pair. It was not necessary or expedient to spend all one made for personal

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wear or for the sake of trying to outdo the "Jones'."

A man could start in the mercantile business with a very few hundred dollars of capital and but very little was invested in fixtures or furniture.

I have seen Ponca City in every stage of its development from a struggling town of pioneer days to a thriving modern city.

In the early years of the oil industry in Kansas, I made a visit to an oil well near Peru, Kansas, in company with a friend of mine and after viewing the oil well I remarked to my companion that I was coming back to the Territory and head off that oil stream. It was not long after that until I had accomplished what I set out to do in the oil business, the results of which enhanced my financial fortunes in no small way.

I am interested in many of the leading industries of Ponca City; its leading hostelry, the Jens-Marie Hotel, is a monument to my interest in civic pride and beauty.

At one time in the early history of Ponca City, the

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town boasted of fourteen saloons with board walks all over town and when the cowboys came to town in the early days they would get "tanked up" and then ride their ponies up and down the plank walks and sometimes ride into the saloons. I could always tell when they got "full" by the racket they would make when they began riding up and down the board walks.

I believe that people are healthier and better off in every way who work regular, getting plenty of exercise, and eat wholesome, substantial food and sleep six or seven hours out of each twenty-four, and not worry or grieve their life away over trifles or matters beyond their control. I have often laughed in the face of adversity, whether it was a crop failure that involved the entire country or a personal matter. My chief aim was to cultivate a cheerful disposition and instil that spirit in others.