

JESS'S WORK AS A COWBOY

(Going back to when you were a cowboy--where did you go when you worked as a cowboy?)

Out southwest of here--a place they call Shamrock (Texas). An open ranch. It was run by a man that was commissioned to run that ranch by some of these big high-up money people, you know. I don't even know the names of the managers, either. We didn't care about that. All we want is a good pony and saddle. Then when you're a cowboy, we had to eat off of chuck wagons. Morning, noon, night. Then when we'd ride out to see how the stock were, we usually carried summer sausages about this long and this wide, and a little old can of coffee in case we happened to run on to any water, we'd make our coffee. And gingersnaps, crackers, cheese. That was our dinner. And of course we had a regular barracks there where we had our meals; and bunks.

(Were there some other Indian fellows out there?)

Well, one year there was two of us. A friend of mine I went to school with. He was from Watonga. He stayed all summer. And when it rained we had no tent or nothing to go to.

(What did you do?)

Well, he and I--of course we used to camp a lot--we got the boss to let us have an ax. We went down to the creek and got us some of these chinaberry poles. We cut four or five poles and I had my canvas. And we cut a ridge pole and two or three forks. And we put our canvas over that and we had a place to stay. And we peg it along the side, just like these A-shaped tents. But otherwise if it be raining you have to get under the chuck wagon or something like that, unless it be lightening, and then we stay away from anything metal. And then we all had hair ropes and when you lay down at night, just take the saddle off your