

LEGEND & STORY FORM

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WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

HAMES, W. S. (DR.) - INTERVIEW.

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Field worker's name Robert H. Boatman

This report made on (date) November 16, 1937

1. This legend was secured from (name) Dr. W. S. Hames

Address Blanchard, Oklahoma

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story _____

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 5

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Boatman, Robert H. - Investigator.
Indian Pioneer History - S-149.
November 16, 1937.

Interview with Dr. W. S. Hames.
Blanchard, Oklahoma.

I was born March 27, 1857, in Georgia, and after receiving some education there I attended the University of Arkansas, in Fayetteville.

In 1881 I came to the Territory and settled near Skulleyville, in the Short Mountain neighborhood and began my career as a school teacher among the settlers of the country.

The school house was made of roughly hewn logs with a lean-to shack on one side to put wood in during the winter, and the interior was almost as rough as the outside. There was a huge stove in one corner where the children, after their long walks or rides, gathered to extract what little warmth possible. They had no desks, only rough benches to sit on. They used slates which were washed when needed to be used for different lessons. The only decoration in the room was the American Flag. Each morning at nine school promptly began. The pupils sang a song or two, had prayer, and began their day of studies.

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The only lessons taught were: reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. As the students progressed they studied some history and geography, but very little.

This school was of the subscription type, each person attending paying the fee of \$1.00 per month, and both whites and Indians attended. As the Indians could not speak the English language, there was the great difficulty of teaching it to them. The words, when pronounced, had no meaning to the Indians.

I remember one of my first illustrations. A small girl came forward to have "stitch" pronounced. I pronounced it and on realizing she knew no more about it than before, sought a way to make her understand. I pointed to the stitching on my sleeve and asked what she called it. She told me, pointing to the word in the book, and the stitching on my sleeve I said "stitch". In this way I began teaching the Indians the English language. The Indian pupils, after being told or showed once, were considerably quicker to learn than the other students. They were more willing to study and cooperate with the teacher than were the others.

Later, I took up the practice of medicine and as I

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was well known in this part of the country I had a considerably good practice. All my medicines were made from herbs and administered to my patients in what I believed to be of the most benefit.

At this time there was an unusual amount of mythical treatment practiced and I was somewhat shocked at the first case I ever saw.

If a sick person didn't seem to have a chance to revive the Indians went out and dug a grave, laid poles crosswise over it and built a fire down in the grave. They let the fire burn out until it only smoked, then they lay the sick person on the poles and let the smoke come up on them. They were then taken home and if they died they were buried in the grave, if they lived "The Great Spirit willed it so." Thus it was in many cases. The Indians believed in the Great Spirit and thought if they did his will here, he would take them to the Happy Hunting Ground when they died.

When an Indian died his horse and all other dear possessions were buried with him. No Indian wanted to go to the Happy Hunting Grounds unprepared.

I have spent most of my time since coming to the

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Territory in the advancing of the state and its education.

I now reside at Blanchard, where I have lived for the past thirty years, practicing medicine.