

#4020

106

4006

Ethel B. Tackitt,
Field Worker.

4320
107

* 8 -

Form A-(S-149)

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt.

This report made on (date) May 11 1937

Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.

1. Name Nathan J. McElroy.

2. Post Office Address Rt. 2 Blair, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Ten miles East, two miles North

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 5th Year 1858

5. Place of birth Paris, Lamar County, Texas.

The place was called Pin-hook at that time.

6. Name of Father John Robert McElroy Place of birth Alabama.

Other information about father Was a Texas Pioneer.

7. Name of Mother Narcissus Webb Place of birth Missouri.

Other information about mother a typical pioneer mother who willingly
from the Indians.

gave all she and her husband possessed to buy their children back

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 .

Ethel B. Tackitt,
Field Worker.

Mr. McElroy volunteered the following account of his life and experiences.

I was born March 5th, 1858, near the present town of Paris in Lamar County, Texas. It was then called Pin-hook.

My father was John Robert McElroy, a pioneer to Texas from Alabama, and my mother was Narcissus Webb McElroy, who was a native of Missouri. Our family lived on a farm and also raised stock.

On Sunday afternoon of June 7th 1869, I, with a group of other children, went down on the creek to hunt berries and toward evening we started to return home. I told them that I would go over toward a little mountain and drive the horses home, as that was my task. My cousin, Robert Lackey, age nineteen, walked on with my sister, Ellen, age thirteen, my brother William Dorie, age seven, and the other children.

When I came near the horses at the foot of the little mountain, my dog began to bark and I soon discovered a number of Indians were there and they had the horses tied. I ran back as fast as I could go and the Indians were after me. My cousin saw what was happening and he grabbed my little brother, Dorie, or "Skinnie" as we called him and

all started running for the house. They simply ran us down and overtook us. They killed my cousin Robert. Then they tied me on a horse and taking my sister, Ellen, and little brother, "Skinnie", each on a horse with an Indian, they set out, we were to learn, for the Indian Territory.

They were a band of Comanches on a horse stealing raid and we traveled two days and nights without stopping, only for a short halt. At last after this long journey, we crossed the North Fork of Red River and came to the mouth of a great canyon which is now called Devil's Canyon in Kiowa County, Oklahoma. Here a great band of Comanche Indians were camped and in the valley to the north of the mountains, which are the Wichitas. The Wichitas and Caddos had a great encampment. There were more than a thousand. I am sure. They are grouped a little to the east. The Kiowa Indians lived northwest, which is now in the vicinity of Lake Altus and Lakeside Park. These were all great bands of Indians.

At the big Comanche Camp we rested two days and nights, then the whole band moved about thirty-five miles northwest to what is now called Spring Creek, here the band again

made a village and after a few days a band of thirty-six young warriors prepared for a horse stealing trip or raid and I was taken along with them. My sister, Ellen, and brother, Dorie, were left at the camp with the women and children.

This band of young warriors took me through what is now the Panhandle of Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Nebraska, and Kansas. I remember seeing the towns of Fort Sumner, New Mexico and Ogalallah, Nebr. The band of warriors gathered about two hundred horses. When we came back the tribe was at Fort Cobb, Oklahoma, then Indian Territory. My brother and sister were all right and I was glad to see them, but had enjoyed my trip as the Indians were good to me. It is true we had nothing to eat but meat and some wild fruits which we found on the way, but the Indians killed plenty of deer, antelope and buffalo. They cooked the meat over a fire sometimes on a green stick sharpened into a fork and sometimes when we camped long enough they would dig a hole in the ground and pack it hard, then they would build a fire in it and make it hot burning coals and hot ashes. This they would drag out of the hole and place

the fresh meat in it and cover the meat with leaves or straw and place the hot dirt over it and cover it all with the fire and leave it until it was thoroughly cooked.

I was owned by an Indian named Pascidia. He was about forty years old and as I had been raised to ride a horse and live much in the open, the Indian life was not hard for me and I was like all boys, so I soon learned to talk to them and enjoyed their rambling. They seemed to like me.

Indians' bucks never work, so Pascidia had his own daughter, Vemne, (which means Clear Water in Comanche) and the daughter of Black-horse to wait upon me. I can't remember Black-horse's girl's name. I liked both of the girls and knew them for many years. Black-horse's girl died about two years ago.

My brother and sister were not so happy. They lived in the Indian camp with the squaws and papooses and helped them get wood and water as well as assist with the other camp duties. The squaws and children waited upon the bucks, who only killed the meat, while the squaws skinned the animal, cut it up and carried it into camp.

This was hard work for my sister, and little brother and of course they grieved for home.

All this time my parents and their friends were making every effort in their power to locate our whereabouts and finally a white man called Dutch Bill, whose wife was a Cheyenne Indian and who traded with the Indians as they had a store near Fort Cobb, told my father that he thought we were among the Comanches. Father had also found in the Indian Territory a man who was his friend during the Civil War. He was called Pottawatomie Joe and these men agreed to help father by buying us, through the Cheyenne Indians from the Comanches.

Father sold his farm and stock in Texas and brought \$1950.00 to the Indian Territory and through Dutch Bill and his wife and Pottawatomie Joe we were bought from the Comanches by the Cheyennes and returned to our parents in November of 1869. We were with the Indians more than five months.

My brother was owned by Eacanta. I cannot recall the name of the Indian who owned my sister.

We went back to Texas with our parents but in later years, after I was a grown man, I was quite friendly with many of these Indians.

I married my wife, Cynthia Jane Groves (white), who was born in Limestone County, Texas, on December 7, 1859.

On October 7, 1886, she and I settled on our claim in old Greer County, which is yet our home and is located only two and one half miles southeast of the Old Chisholm Trail Crossing on the North Fork of Red River and about eight miles from Devil's Canyon, where the Comanches were camped when they captured my sister, Ellen, brother, Dorie, and myself sixty-eight years ago last June.

My wife and I with our family have lived on this farm fifty years. In that time we have lived under the Government of Texas, Indian Territory, and the State of Oklahoma. Greer County and Jackson County have never moved from the same place. We feel that we have done our part toward the building of Oklahoma.