

HARRIS, JACK

INTERVIEW

#4409

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INDEX CARDS:

Texas County
Lawyer

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

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#4409

Field Worker's name Mr. Carl H. MayfieldThis report made on (date) June 14, 19371. Name Mr. Jack Harris2. Post Office Address Guymon, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

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

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

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 _____.

An interview with Jack Harris, Guymon, Oklahoma.
By - Carl H. Mayfield, Field Worker.

June 14, 1937.

Mr. Harris came to Texhoma, Oklahoma, in the spring of 1901, looking for a location. In the fall he returned to Collings County, Texas, to bring his family to the Panhandle. He returned in the spring of 1902 by the way of Altus and Arnett. He had intended to go on to El Paso, Tex, but the water was improving his wife's health and they stayed in Guymon.

In the fall of 1902 Mr. Harris opened a law office and later formed a partnership with a Mr. Wiley. This firm lasted several years, until the death of Mr. Wiley, when Jim Bresslin bought Wiley's interest from the Wiley estate.

Mr. Harris traveled all over the country to various court houses before statehood. "I used a flour sack for a brief case and another one for a suit case, tied behind the saddle or in the back of a livery buggy". He made trips in all kinds of weather, being away from home several weeks at a time, going from one session of court to the next.

On the first of January, 1904, Mr. Harris and Lee Jackson went into Ochiltree County, Texas, to foreclose a mortgage on a pair of mules. The ground was covered with snow and they made slow time with a team and buggy. On the return trip they stopped for dinner at the O'Laughlin ranch but refused to stay over when offered the privilege. They traveled after dark

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in the direction they thought was right. After driving several hours Mr. Harris wondered if Lee were not lost. They finally found a fence that Mr. Jackson said was a drift fence and he still declared he knew where he was going; but when Jack started to pull the staples he knew that the fence was a new one and not a drift fence. Later they saw a light several miles to one side and started in that direction. The light happened to be the headquarters of the Jackson Ranch. Mr. Harris said that was one light he was glad to see.

During the summer of 1904 he was called to Curley near Kenton, Oklahoma, to defend a young man accused of stealing \$220.00 from a country preacher. After several free helpings of the bottle, the defense won by saying that in the first place no country preacher could possibly have \$220.00 at one time, and if he did have he had obtained it under false pretense.

During his law practice in No Man's Land, later the Panhandle of Oklahoma, Mr. Harris became one of the best criminal lawyers in that section. His big asset was his ability to get decisions reversed by the higher court.
