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BOWLING, SALLY. INTERVIEW 10124

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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BOWLING, SALLY

INTERVIEW

10126

Field worker's name Robert H. Bowman

This report made on (date) March 1, 193 8

1. This legend was
secured from (name) Sally Bowling

Address Route #2, 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 _____

BOWLING, SALLY

INTERVIEW

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Robert H. Boatman
Investigator
March 1, 1938

Interview With Sally Bowling,
Route #2, Blanchard, Oklahoma

My parents were married in England at a young age. Soon after this they sailed to America and settled in 1867 in Tennessee, where I was born January 18, 1870. When I was small they moved to Texas where my father died.

I came with my mother to the Indian Territory in 1888 when I was eighteen years old. We came by wagon and team, this was in the days of riding skirts and side-saddles. I had a pony all of my own and this I rode most of the way from Texas. We crossed Red River near Gainesville on an old ferry boat known as Bounds ferry. After much persuasion my pony and I, with the wagon, went aboard the old ferry boat. The boat got stuck on the sand long before it banked and I rode my pony off into the river and came on out, then as we journeyed along in the Territory, which was almost a no-man's-land, I got the thrill of my

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life in this way. There was only one road and of course, we were travelling over it. Drinking water was very scarce and as we were travelling along badly in need of water, I spied a spring some ways off the road and taking a jug from the wagon, I rode up to the spring, intending to return at once with water for the rest of the family, as they were driving on. I reached the spring and a man and woman were there. I got to talking to them and stayed longer than I intended and when I rode back to the road I saw the wagon had gotten out of sight. I started in pursuit and had gone only a short ways when all at once I came face to face with two Indians, the first I had ever seen. Well, I couldn't go back so I began lashing my pony with my riding quirt and I guess I would have run down these Indians had they not cleared the road. Anyway, after some two miles of hard racing, I caught up with the wagon and thereafter I kept in close contact with it as we travelled on. We were seven weeks

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on the road and finally stopped and settled at Chink, some few miles from where Ardmore now is. There was one store there and we called it the Coffee Store, for the man kept very few things other than coffee, though as I was to later find out that was about all that was necessary for a groceryman to keep in store for people lived principally on corn bread, black coffee, beef and wild game such as turkey and deer.

My first home in the Territory was a log cabin of one small room and the kitchen was the big open world with a small tree for a cover. One morning as I was preparing breakfast, in 1889, a man rode up and asked for my brother, who soon came out from the cabin. The man soon explained his mission. Old Mr. Keys had been found hanging from a limb of a tree and this man had come for brother to help bury him. Keys had been hung for harboring horse thieves in the early days. Ropes and guns were the law, people paid no attention to minor offenses. Horse thieves, who were very numerous, were hated above all.

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The law-abiding citizens respected and paid tribute to each other in gratitude. The churches and schools were made possible by subscription. At Community gatherings the men folk always carried their guns, at Church as well as other places. However, upon entering a place of worship all guns were taken off and stacked in some designated place until services were over and nothing thought about it, as this was a custom of the early pioneers and, too, a necessary precaution against the more dangerous element.

After some two years in the Territory and I had become more accustomed to the new country another surprise came. Only a short distance from my home a dance was given and sometime during the night a brawl was started which we could easily hear and then came the firing of guns. Pretty soon, then, everything got quiet and the dancing began again. The next morning the men came over for my brother to help bury a man named Charlie Allen, who had been killed

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during the fight of the night. After he was killed they piled him up in the corner of the chimney and proceeded with the dance. This manner of law and order continued to exist in the Territory for several years and had it not been for the more refined citizens coming in and taking a stronger hold, this, no doubt, would have become one of the worst countries known.

I now live at my home six miles southeast of Blanchard where I have lived since 1900 and here where I have spent the better part of my life, I expect to remain.