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BYERS, CHAL

INTERVIEWS

Form A-(S-149)

240

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

7042

Field Worker's name James H. Fleming

This report made on (date) August 3. 1937

1. Name Chal Byers

2. Post Office Address Cleveland, 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 _____

BYERS, CHAL

INTERVIEW

7042

Interview with Chal Byers
and Harry Duncan of Cleveland.

Mr. Byers has been in Oklahoma since 1869. He used to work at the old Homing Post before the founding of Cleveland. He was one of the pioneers, and founders of that city, opening a store there in 1893.

He speaks some Indian dialects and is writing a book containing much information about early life among the Osages, especially in Oklahoma.

One half mile southeast of Cleveland was an old fort, built there by the Cherokees, about 1880; the same time as the formation of the C. S. L. S. A.

Instrumental in its construction were some part Indians, J. W. Jerden and his sons Tom, Lee and Jim.

The fort was built of logs, was sixteen feet square, and two stories high with gun holes in a sort of cupola above the roof, and in the center of the main building. The roof was pitched and very steep. There was never much occasion to use this fort.

About three miles southeast of Cleveland on the Arkansas River there was an old ferry, in operation about 1890, and operated by George Vickers, a brother-in-law of Bill Doolin, the outlaw.

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Later in 1896 or '97 the Dunlap Ferry was built.

This was northeast of Cleveland near the present vehicle bridge across the Arkansas. A man named John Morris operated this for a while.

Another old ferry was at Leroy, four miles northeast of Keystone. This was a meeting point of two mail carriers on the mail route from Cleveland to and from Sapulpa.

Sinnet was also a small settlement, about six miles northwest of Leroy. Here there was a store and post office.

Much of the supplies for settlers in this vicinity was freighted from Sapulpa and Stillwater.

There were small Osage Indian villages all along the opposite side of the Arkansas from the present site of Cleveland. These were at intervals of every five or six miles.

There were villages at Osage, Price, Indianola and near the present vehicle bridge north of Cleveland.

Mr. Byers said one of the earliest trading posts he heard of in northeast Oklahoma was in the forks and at the junction of the Big and Little Caney Creeks, north of Bartlesville. This was there about 1839 and was run

by Perry Beit. When Perry died his wife went out near Ponca City and married an Indian named White Hair or Long Hair.

Two of the best known ranches near here were the Three D Ranch and the Bar X Bar. The Bar X Bar or -X- (arrangement unknown by writer) was two miles south of the present Cleveland. Among its cowboys were: Red Buck, Newcomb, the Dalton boys, Dunn brothers, Ed Strong, and the Narrow Gauge Kid whose name was something like McClain, and who still lives at the same place between here and Oilton.

The Three D Ranch was in the Osage Hills about half way between Cleveland and Skiatook and had as its foreman, Bill Doolin, before he turned outlaw.

The Dalton boys robbed a railway station agent at White Eagle. They left the telegrapher, a half breed, who had just learned telegraphy, tied but he managed to get to the sender and sent an S.O.S. It happened that there were some troops at a nearby garrison, the Ponca Agency. The Daltons expected them to pursue and lost no time in getting back into the Osage Country. They went to the Three D Ranch and requested fresh horses from Bill Doolin.

BYERS, CHAL

INTERVIEW

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Doolin refused them but told of another man south of there where they might get them.

They bought the horses from this man and later, "Tulsa Jack" told Doolin the United States officers were after the him for telling Daltons where to obtain horses.

Doolin disbelieved this until he saw seven or eight United States Marshals coming to his place. He fled before they got him and it is said this was the beginning of the "Outlaw Doolin".

The man who gave the horses to the Daltons said they were taken at the point of a gun.

Note: I am not quoting anyone. It is rumored and common belief that when Doolin died of tuberculosis near Lawson, now Quay, that Heck Thomas who got the reward was to split it with some of Doolin's immediate relatives. They supposedly had allowed him to be set up and shot after he died, to make it appear that he had died in a fight. This was so the reward could be collected.