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BECK, REBECCA DAVIS. INTERVIEW 10597 344

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

345

Field Worker's name Maurice R. AndersonThis report made on (date) April 27 19381. Name Mrs. Rebecca Davis Beck2. Post Office Address Paoli, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 8 Year 18905. Place of birth Ardmore, Indian Territory.6. Name of Father George W. Davis Place of birth TexasOther information about father Deceased7. Name of Mother Columba Rebecca Davis Place of birth TexasOther information about mother Deceased

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 4

Maurice R. Anderson
Investigator
April 27, 1938

Interview with Rebecca Davis Beck
Paoli, Oklahoma.

My father and mother came to the Indian Territory in 1890 and settled at Ardmore, in the Chickasaw Nation where I was born the same year. Ardmore only had two stores then, I have heard my father say.

We lived there three years, then moved to a town called Texanna, Indian Territory, lived there one year, moved over near Tahlequah, Indian Territory, and there I began to have my experience with the Indians. We lived close to some Full Bloods who could not talk English. I was then four years old and an old squaw would come over to our house and put up her fingers, meaning so much money to buy me as she thought I looked like an Indian as I had long black hair. This scared me so that every time I would see her coming I would crawl back under the bed and remain there until she was gone. Mother was always afraid this Indian woman might steal me.

In that day and time there were not many tame chickens but there were lots of prairie chickens and their eggs were what we used. I have helped my mother many a time hunt the nests of prairie chickens.

Wild game was plentiful here then. I have seen cattle pass our house in great herds; men would be driving them to market. Most of the houses then were log houses with the roofs covered with boards.

We didn't have a cook stove when I was small. My mother cooked on a fire place, I remember, until I was eight years old. I didn't get to go to school until I was ten years old as there were not many schools in the country then where we lived, and when I started to school it cost 50 cents a month for each child, and if a man had a large family it would cost him so much that most of the kids couldn't go as money was scarce during those days.

My first school was a one-room, one teacher school; we had to sit on home made seats and we held our books in our hands until someone thought out a way to nail a plank on the top of the bench for a desk. About three months of schooling was all I ever had until we moved to Wynnewood in 1900. When we moved to Wynnewood we came through in wagons; the creeks would get bank full and sometimes we would have to camp three or four days before we could cross a creek as there were no bridges to speak of then. While living near Muskogee Father would take cotton to the gin there. One evening while he was in Muskogee he saw the man and boy who killed the

cashier of the bank at Muskogee. This is the story that was told Father and he came home and told us about it. A man and his little boy had taken a bale of cotton to town and after the man had sold the cotton they started for home and after they had been driving for a few miles and it was growing dark, the man looked back and saw what he thought was an old woman riding a horse. The man and his little boy did not think much about this and after driving a few miles further they camped for the night, made a fire and by the time they got the fire going, up rode an old woman and asked if she could stay by the fire for the night as she said, she had been traveling all day and had a long ways to go. Of course the man told her she was welcome and while she was sitting by the fire the little boy discovered that the lady wore boots. When the boy and his father went to the wagon to sleep the little boy told his father about seeing the lady's boots and asked his father why she wore boots, as women didn't wear boots then. After the boy told his father about what he had seen, his father told him to lie down and wait awhile. Then the man began to snore as loud as he could. The boy did as he was told and his father got his gun and hid in the front of the wagon where he could see the old lady at all times. After waiting a while the man saw the old lady take out a gun and start for the wagon and as she

climbed upon the front of the wagon the old man shot and killed her. Then he got out of the wagon and examined the dead body to see if it was that of a woman, and to his surprise he found that it was the body of a man dressed in woman's clothes, so this old man and his son hooked up and went back to Muskogee and told what had taken place. My father was there when the old man told his story, so after the body was brought to Muskogee it was found to be that of the cashier of the bank in Muskogee at that time.

We farmed at Wynnewood five years then moved to Elmore City and were living there on the farm when Indian Territory became part of the state of Oklahoma in 1907. After statehood I was married to E. H. Beck. I now live in Paoli.

Note:

An effort was made by the Muskogee office, S-149, to substantiate the story of the killing of the Bank cashier. It was desired to have his name and what motive was ascribed for his donning a woman's apparel. Other facts concerning the whole episode seemed necessary to complete the story. Nothing could be learned about it, however. The tale is included, therefore, but is not vouched for.--Editor.