

GARDNER, CHARLES C.

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

GARDNER, CHARLES C.

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Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt

This report made on (date) October 13, 1937

Lone Wolf, Kiowa County

1. Name Charles C. Gardner

2. Post Office Address Lone Wolf, Kiowa County

3. Residence address (or location) R. 3

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 7 Year 1881

5. Place of birth Llano County, Texas

6. Name of Father William A. Gardner Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father Confederate Soldier in Civil War

7. Name of Mother Addaline Faga Gardner Place of birth Arkansas

Other information about mother Typical Pioneer 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 6.

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Ethel B. Tackitt,  
Investigator,  
October 13, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. Charles C. Gardner,  
Route 3, Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.

I was born in Llano County, Texas, August 7, 1881.

My father, William A. Gardner, a native of Arkansas came to Texas in 1867 and settled in McLennan County. Father was a Confederate Soldier in the Civil War and both my parents were typical pioneers.

As the Indian Territory and old Greer County settled up our family became more and more anxious to go into the new country and get a home on the free lands which the Government was opening and in 1894, my parents moved our family in a covered wagon to old Greer County and settled one mile north of the present town of Blair, which was then called Dott and was one mile south of the present townsite to be exact. Blair is in Jackson County now as old Greer County has been divided since, into Jackson and Harmon Counties and forms part of Beckham County.

We were glad to get the land but there was nothing on it but thick mesquite grass and hundreds of head of

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cattle which belonged to the big cow ranches scattered over the country.

We dug a dugout and made ready to cultivate the land. All equipment had to be hauled from Vernon, Texas, across the country by wagon on roads that were only wagon tracks and the valley in which Altus is now located was so flat that the water would not drain off and in wet weather the valley was almost impassable; there were also many marshes and small branches where Blair is now, which in that early time made wagon travel a hard and tedious task. The draining of the land in later years has changed that condition.

The winters then were long and cold and the only way of heating the dugout was with a wood stove which was often only a cast iron cooking stove. If one was fortunate enough to own a heating stove, it was a long bodied cast iron affair which stood on four short legs and was usually about three feet high with a top that would slide to one side so that chunks of wood could be put in at the top as well as at the door which was in one end. These stoves were made of cast iron, always did get big cracks in the long sides when they were heated and the small sparks of fire and ashes

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would roll out through these cracks, but to many people this made little difference as the dugouts usually had dirt floors.

Most all of the wood on the Greer County side of North Fork of Red River had been cut out when we moved into the country and there was no wood to be had anywhere except in the Kiowa Indian Territory. There one could get an abundance of wood simply by crossing North Fork along where No. 44 Highway bridge is located and at many other points along the river on the south side of the Wichita Mountain range there were elm, cottonwood, cedar, hackberry, oak and pecan trees. This timber was a great temptation to the shivering claim-holders on the Greer County side of the river but the United States Government said that the green timber in the Indian Territory should not be cut by anybody and there were United States Deputy Marshals who patrolled the border who were anxious to enforce the order. The dry wood could be hauled out provided the Indians would allow the white people to do so, but the Kiowa tribes camped all along the river and they would charge the settlers usually 25 cents a load. That was not much money but in those days

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the Greer County "Nesters" had no money at all as there was no way to earn money except as one might get a job digging post holes or building fence for some cow outfit or perhaps might sell a little feed to them, which was not often.

One day I took out my team and wagon and crossed North Fork just south of Soldier Mountain to try to get a load of wood. The Kiowas were camped thick all along and I was afraid of them but I knew that we had to have some wood. I made my way up on Tepee Creek and had picked up a fine load of dry wood and was about ready to start home, when up rode Chief Little Bow and two other Indian bucks. Little Bow told me that I must pay him 25 cents for the load. I told him that I had no money and did my best to persuade him to let me take the wood but he refused and told me to unload. There was nothing else to do so I threw all the wood off then they told me to get out. I did not have to be urged and I started toward the river; they followed behind and gradually dropped back. I watched them and when they were about three miles away I drove in

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a "swag" and left my horses and wagon and climbed up on the mountain and watched the Indians turn back and loaded up as much dry wood as I could and made a dash for the river crossing and luckily, I made it before any of the other Indians saw me.

Securing posts for fencing was a serious problem and on account of the stock all farm lands had to have good fences if any crops were raised. On Otter Creek on the Indian Territory side, there was much fine oak timber and the posts were so badly needed, that almost everybody would take the risk of getting caught at cutting posts which was quite a serious offence as it was stealing from the Federal Government, but often times it could be done as there were not many Indians in that particular locality.

Eight of the settlers in our neighborhood decided that they would all take their teams and wagons and go over on Otter Creek together and watch for the deputy marshals and so get their posts but they got caught. The marshals were on them before they knew it and arrested them, sending their teams and wagons back home with word as to what had become

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of the men. Then the marshals loaded all the posts into one of the wagons and started for El Reno across the country as there were no roads in this part of the Territory then. They were driving at night and along the way one of the fellows was sitting in the back end of the wagon with his feet hanging out when the wagon jolted over a rock and he fell out. Nobody noticed him and he hid behind rocks until the wagon and the marshal passed on. Then he crawled out and walked clear back to his home in Greer County and they did not have his name so he was not fined for stealing posts in the Indian Territory. This was a pioneer joke which is told about this man until the present day.

When the Kiowa country opened, I moved into the Lone Wolf community and have lived here since. I have followed farming and have lived for several years not a great way from the place where Little Bow made me unload the wood when I was a boy.