

GOSSELIN, TELIA.

INTERVIEW

#9867

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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

GOSSELIN, TELIA

INTERVIEW

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Field Worker's name Zaidee B. Bland

This report made on (date) January 12, 1938 1938

1. Name Mrs. Telia Gosselin

2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 517 N. Surgeon Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 7 Year 1873

5. Place of birth Hill County, Texas.

6. Name of Father Isham Pool Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Angeline Alexander Place of birth Missouri

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 \_\_\_\_\_.



Field Worker, Zaidée B. Bland,  
January 12, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. Telia Gosselin,  
Altus, Oklahoma.

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The Herring Brothers, who owned one of the largest ranches in this part of the country, had a brother in Hill County, Texas, who married one of my sisters.

The summer after they were married they came up here on a visit. He and sister liked it so well that when he came back home he told father that he was going to sell out and move up here. Father asked us how we would like to sell out and come, too. Mother was right in for it but I did not much want to leave a civilized country and come to this outlandish place for I was just sixteen and wanted to go on to school. My objections did not weigh, so father sold home and all household goods except bedding and cooking utensils. Father and my brother-in-law chartered a car and loaded it with our horses, cows, chickens and pigs and billed it to Vernon, Texas. We all came by passenger train to Vernon. Mr. M. Herring



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met us at Vernon with his teams. Our car was opened and our wagons set up. Feed and the other things from the car were loaded and we all came on to the Herring Ranch and stayed until Papa could go to Mangum and file. After he filed he had to haul all the lumber from Vernon to make our house. If I remember right we stayed with the Herrings for about three months. I became well acquainted while we were there and that saved me from the lonesome time some of the girls had to go through.

The children still own this land that Father filed on. Mr. James, our nearest neighbor, still owns his quarter section of land, also. Father did not get proved up until 1900 but I have the original deed granted him by President McKinley.

Copied from the original deed.

Original Certificate of Registration.

Homestead certificate No. 624

Application "1628"

ISHAM POOL

N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 20- Twp. 1N. - Range 19 west

WILLIAM McKINLEY PRES.

Feb. 14, 1900.

One hundred and twenty - four Independence of America.

F. M. McKean Sec.

C. M. Bush Recorder Gen. land Office.

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A niece of mine and a granddaughter of my father's lives on the premises. The old house has fallen into decay. A new house and out-buildings have been built but the old well still furnishes water just as it did when Father and my brothers dug it.

#### Schools and Churches.

There were neither schools nor churches for several years after we came here.

Mr. James, our neighbor, had a son to take typhoid fever and die. Father dug the grave for this lad on the quarter of land owned by Mr. James, father of the boy. In the Spring Mr. James donated land near this grave for a school house. Father and the neighbors hauled the lumber from Vernon and built a one-room school house and made the home-made benches to sit on. This school was named "Francis." It stood for many years but was blown away and never built back. The cemetery is still used for burying the pioneers and their descendants. The first few years the school was taught for three months in the year, just for little folks. It was rather hard on the older girls and boys, for we got very little schooling.



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Always the young people got together somewhere every Sunday. There were no houses in the country to speak of. Of course, there were ranch houses, but they were few and far between, nevertheless we met at each other's dugout. We had weddings in the dugouts, also singings, play parties and lots of times just gathered to be together. There were no class distinctions whatever. No, where you from, or are you fit to associate with. If you behaved yourself you were welcome anywhere. Brother Morgan was the first preacher I ever remember hearing in this part of the country. He was a cowboy who went back home somewhere and got religion and came back and began to preach. He was called the "Cowboy Preacher". We had an organized Sunday School as soon as the school house was built. This was a union Sunday School and everybody, young and old, attended every Sunday.

#### Dangers.

The greatest danger to life was the quicksand and the wild cattle.

Father went to Vernon once for supplies and camped on the bank of the river one week waiting for the river to



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run down. One of the two horses he was driving was a spotted Indian pony. They say an Indian pony always knows when the sand is dangerous and will throw himself down on his side every time.

The cowboys rode into the river and milled around and thought they had settled the sand sufficiently to make a safe crossing. Father's was the first team to drive in. He had his wagonbed full of groceries. The minute the Indian pony touched a quicky place down he flopped. Of course, the team had to be cut loose. The wagonbed floated off of the running gear and floated on down the stream. The men gathered on the bank, rode in on their horses and succeeded in bringing to shore all the supplies but let the wagonbed float on down the river. Father came on home on the running gear of his wagon. Weeks afterwards some one sent him word that the bed had been marooned away down the river fifteen miles or more and he went after it.

There was a bad little creek near us called Stinking Creek. It was mean to have water back up into it and flood all the surrounding homes and fields. Dunbar was a community center, with a store or two, a school house and a



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blacksmith shop. This little branch would get up and water would come up into the store above the counters.

#### Animals.

There were plenty of birds but no wild animals to speak of except the coyote. Coyotes are not in the least afraid of man or dogs. I have seen them trot along by the side of the fence as unconcerned as a puppy, then all at once they would dart into the yard and pick up a duck or goose and trot away with it. They were worse about ducks and geese than chickens. I think the chickens were more on the alert to detect their presence and were quicker to get out of the way.

#### Indians.

We lived right on the trail of the Indians when they went from the reservation to Vernon to trade. We saw a big body of them passing often. You know they always go strung out, one behind the other. They seldom stopped. I remember once we were eating dinner. We heard a slight noise and looking up saw a lone Indian standing in the doorway to the front room. Father invited him in and seated him. We went on with our dinner. When we were



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through Father said to Mother "Put away the food you do not want the Indian to have and I will invite the Indian to eat. Doubtless before he is seated to eat there will be others." Before the first Indian was through eating there was not standing room in our kitchen. Mother kept setting out food and they ate it all, not seeming to know how to use a knife and fork at all. I remember the dogs came in with them and one Indian hit a dog with a knife just as though he thought that was what it was for.

I have seen droves of cattle pass so constantly for a week at a time that one herd would not get out of sight north of us until there was another one in sight coming from the south. They would pass that way day and night for weeks at a time. Sometimes I would be coming from somewhere on my horse and meet a herd. The boss man would always send a cowboy to ride between me and the herd for protection.

I am very blond, my hair was always very light. I had an abundance of it when I was young and wore it in two plaits down my back. I went to a picnic once



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where there were a good many Indians. They would come up to me and reach out their hands and take hold of my plaits and jabber about them. An interpreter explained to me that they meant no harm but thought my hair very beautiful, like the sun, they said. I did not feel offended in the least but a little afraid until it was explained to me.

It is remarkable how much sense a horse has. Once I was riding with a friend. You just rode anywhere over the prairie if you had no special destination. We had ridden a little farther from home than we realized and saw that the sun was setting. We were down where Otter Creek joins North Fork of Red River. There is quite a lot of alkali soil and it looks white on top and no grass grows over it. I never thought of the creeks having been up and perhaps making a marsh. I put my horse to the beginning of the white looking flats. He snorted and turned around. I was a little impatient and turned him again and used the quirt on him a little. When he got back to the white place again he reared straight up and, pivoting on his hind legs, he turned



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right around and started home the long way round.

When I got home Father told me that was a marsh and had the horse gone into it both he and I in all probability would have sunk out of sight.