

HOLT, DAN W.

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

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Field worker's name Nannie Lee Burns

This report made on (date) March 28, 1938

1. This legend was secured from (name) Dan W. Holt

Address Quapaw, Oklahoma

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story As he recalls it.

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____

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Nannie Lee Burns,
Investigator,
March 28, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. Dan W. Holt,
Quapaw, Oklahoma.

My father, James Holt, was born in Missouri, January 1, 1849. My mother, Mary Holt, nee Evans, was also born in Missouri, June 27, 1850. I was also born in Missouri, March 25, 1868.

We lived north of the Missouri River and when I was nine years old my parents decided to go to Idaho to live. It was unsafe to cross the plains in those days so my parents joined a train of twelve other families who were also going there and so in May when the grass was old enough to graze the stock upon, the caravan started. We were three hundred and thirteen days on the road.

My father had two wagons with extra horses. The wagons were out-fitted like the pictures of the old prairie schooner that you see. Sometimes mother drove one of the wagons and sometimes one of the children would relieve her in the driving. On leaving, the wagons moved out one behind the other and took it easy until we crossed the Missouri River

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at Omaha and from here on all precautions were taken to safeguard the lives of the persons and the stock from possible danger. At night the wagons camped in a circle with the stock on the inside and two of the men stood guard riding around the camp until midnight when they were relieved by two more who stayed on until morning. We traveled through Platte City and across to Cheyenne. We had no trouble thus far but encountered many cowboys, stage coaches traveling both east and west as then they were maintaining a fairly regular schedule. They were driven by either four or six horses and had their regular stations where fresh horses waited already harnessed. The change of horses was made so quickly that the driver did not leave the boot. When he drove in, the harnessed horses were driven up to the coach as other attendants unhooked the traces and unsnapped the lines from a ring over the horses back. As soon as the fresh horses were driven into position and the traces hooked and the lines snapped they were ready to go as the driver still held the lines which were not changed. We did not see any buffalo but lots of bones on the prairie but had

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plenty of fresh meat including deer and antelope. Often when crossing we would come upon abandoned wagons that had been sacked and sometimes showed signs of having met with foul play and saw many human bones along the way. The roads were not good and could not be called roads except perhaps where we followed the freight and stage routes. These had bridges and ferries across the streams but when we took a short-cut we had neither, nor was it as safe to travel these short-cuts. We did not make many miles a day and had plenty of time to look at the country.

~~As we went farther west the road grew more steep and hilly~~ as we approached the mountains and left the prairies behind. We camped one night beside Buffalo Bill's Ranch and here I saw my first buffalo, I did not like its looks. Then we traveled to Boise City which was then a very small settlement. We had traveled part of the time on the Oregon Trail, part on the Sweetwater Trail and had followed the Union Pacific Railroad Shoshone Falls, and finally ended our long trek at Weiser City. An uncle who had gone through to California came through Oregon to us later after we had settled.

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We settled thirty miles north of Weiser City, where my father traded one of the teams and wagons for a claim of 160 acres. Here there was just a small log house and a makeshift barn.

In the center of this valley built years before was a fort still in good repair, built by the settlers for protection in case of an attack. It was a four winged affair built around a square, one room on the north side, one room on the south side, one room on the east side and one room on the west side and the square thus enclosed between the rooms was an observation platform from which they could look in any direction. The walls were of double logs, that is between the outer and inner walls of logs there was a space of six inches which was filled with dirt. Through these walls there were three inch square port holes through which they could fire. This building had but one door and that was of stout split logs. To my knowledge there was never any attack on the settlers but several times they took refuge here when some of the horses were driven off and

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they feared that they might be attacked.

We lived here two years when my father sold out and came back to Kansas again by wagon but this journey was not nearly so dangerous or so long as the one out. This time we settled seven miles west of Coffeyville, Kansas, and were living there when the Daltons raided Coffeyville.

From there we moved to Missouri seven miles east of Preston or as it is often called Black Oak Point. While living here an instance came to my knowledge that made a deep impression on me. A young man, desperate, held up a store and escaped with three dollars. His horse was shot but he escaped into the woods where he was picked up by a lone man on horseback and when they had put a safe distance between them and the men, the man on horseback asked the boy what he had done and how much money he had taken and when he told him, the man said that he was going to take the money back to the person that it had been taken from and continued, "I would like to be where you are, young man, and have the chance that you have to straighten up and go straight; but I am Jesse James and will never be

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given the chance that you have". He talked to the boy and secured his promise and then he returned the money and afterwards took the boy to a farmer that was a friend of his and secured him employment and the boy, whom I knew, made good.

In 1887, I started out for myself and drifted through Kansas and Colorado working as a farm hand for \$18.00 per month but when the strip opened in 1889, it found Ed Mason and I on the line just south of Caldwell with a wagon and a good team ready for the run.

On the first morning we started with a barrel of water and a supply of provisions, some feed and a small camping outfit. The first night we made a dry camp on the prairie. The second day we found two good claims of 160 acres each three miles west of Pond Creek.

We stayed three days and put up a sod house on my claim about ten by twelve feet. Then we went into Enid where we waited two weeks before we could file. Enid was a wild place, only a tent city with its dance halls and saloons and crap games in the middle of the street. There

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was no law or officers.

One incident that happened while we were there was this, an old couple had secured a good lot and had pitched their tent on the lot and were living there, when one night another and a younger couple pitched their tent on the same lot and ordered the old people to move off. At night a bunch, fifteen or twenty younger men, went to the lot and threw our ropes around the tent poles and then we cut the guy ropes and then pulled the tent down and told this young couple to move. The next morning the intruders were gone. There was lots of jumping of claims and many an honest person was cheated out of his land just this way.

We returned to our claims and built a sod house on Ed's claim and dug a well on both claims. This was all that was required for that year. I returned first to Missouri and then to Kansas where I had a chance to sell my claim for \$600.00 which I did, thinking that I would be ahead, for besides having to live on it and till the soil, at the end of five years you were then required to pay the government \$1.25 per acre and I saw little chance of earning that much farming besides improving it.

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Next I drifted into Pueblo, Colorado where I learned the barber trade and then purchased a two-chair barber shop and here thirty-seven years ago I married Ida Barnett. After staying here six years I got the rheumatism so we started out and I made our way as a photographer staying only two or three weeks usually in a place drifting back east and through Missouri.

Next I studied Pharmacy and then I purchased in 1900 the drug store at Ottawa six miles from Miami.

At that time there were no bridges in this county and but few ferries. Misenhamer had a ferry that he had purchased from Philip Suboak over Spring River east of Ottawa and this side of Seneca, Missouri. Berry's ferry was south and east over the Neosho between Ottawa and Fairland and the ferry was still in operation at Miami over the Neosho.

There were but few bridges and poor roads and sometimes these would get so muddy that they could not travel them in wagons and the people would come in horseback and carry their groceries, etc., home in a sack thrown across the horse either behind or in front of them.

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I knew nothing of trading with the Indians and did not understand their ways at first but I have remained in business in this part of the state ever since and my dealings with them since I learned their ways has been very pleasant. I recall many amusing incidents in those days. For instance; Uncle Jim Long had traded for a year with me on time and had not paid me when one day he said to me,

~~"See that black mare hitched out there. I owe you money.~~

Next time you see her hitched there you take her to your barn, she be yours". I told him that it was too much for his bill. I don't remember ever seeing the mare hitched there again. Things drifted along this way for a while and one day he came into the store and told me that he had a lot of fat hogs and to bring my wagon down to his place and get a load. After he was gone, I said something to Joe R. Woolard, who had lived here sometime and traded and bought stock from them, and he told me that it was their way of paying their debts and to take my wagon and go to the farm. I did and ~~when I got there, I asked me how many he wanted me to take~~ and he said take what I wanted. I asked him what they were

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worth and he gave me no satisfaction, so finally I told him I would take some back to Ottawa and weigh them over the scales of Mr. Fink and then I would ask Joe Woodard what they were worth and I would pay him the difference in money and this was satisfactory with him.

I was still here when Uncle Jimmy died and just before he died he had sold a piece of land and had some money and calling a nephew to his bedside he told him, ~~"Jimmie, first, I want you to pay Dr. Holmes, next pay Holt and then the rest of the people. I guess there will be enough money"~~.

Joe King traded with me for nine years as did many of the other of the older ones living near there. They did not like to live on the prairie but wanted to live east and south of there in the timber. Most of them would trade with me for months before they would say anything about paying but after awhile they would bring or sell me something if they did not have the money. Grandma King who was considered a good Indian Doctor would come to my store and want me to make her up a good healing salve and then she would take it and sell it and sometimes make trips and sell it.

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Amusing things happened in those days as well. I remember when Ti-wah bought his first cook stove. He had got hold of some money and had bought a cook stove as he had been cooking in the yard. Ti-wah had formerly lived at Miami and his log cabin was the first store in Miami, the one opened in 1891 by Geo. Bigham. Ti-wah had given up his location here and moved in 1891 so had not been settled long in this neighborhood as he had moved ~~up the Neosho just above town before he moved to the~~

Ottawa neighborhood. Every fall a week's reunion was held at Baxter Springs and many people would go and camp here and stay the entire week and as Ti-wah had no other way of raising the money to meet his expenses for the week, he sold his cook stove for twenty dollars and took his family to the reunion and went back to cooking in the yard.

Another Ottawa Indian who went every year managed better than this as each year he would raise a mule colt that he would sell to Clarence Griffith just before the reunion which was held the last week in August and take his family to the reunion.

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I was fortunate in my dealings here and after the roads became better and Miami grew to a larger town it began to tell on my business so I sold out and moved to Welch, where I opened a drug store and a grocery store adjoining rooms with my wife in charge of the grocery store. Luckily I was fortunate in my buying during the war days as I ^{always} had the money to buy futures. The last year of the War I made enough money from the grocery store to buy eighty acres of land.

~~At one time when sugar was almost impossible to get,~~
the salesman offered me white sugar that had been refined but not granulated for \$6.00 per hundred, I asked him how much he would sell me and he said ten sacks, I took it and sold it at \$17.00 per hundred. When I sold out my grocery store there, I told the man who bought it that I would invoice my stock to him at the price at that time but not at what I had paid for it as I had coffee that I had bought twelve cents below the market price at that time, as well as seventy-five cent cases of dozen cans of blackberries that were worth \$1.25 and eighty dollar pineapple

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that was then worth one hundred twenty dollars. I fared well in my drug store as well, as I could take this soft sugar and mix it with white Karo Syrup and this made my fountain supplies very popular.

From Welch we came to Commerce, then Hattonville and from there we moved to Quapaw thirteen years ago. Here we have continued our drug store but for several years I have given all of my time to our casket factory here.

At a reunion held near here, an old Indian was arrested for being drunk and taken to Miami and they brought him back the next day and began to question him where he got the whiskey. "You were drunk yesterday at Promenade?" "Maybe, so", he answered. "You were drinking, where did you get it?" "From a man". "Where is he?" Unconcernedly, he replied that he was dead.

Another time, I was approached by an old Indian who drank frequently and he asked me to get him some whiskey and I said, "Jack, if I get you the whiskey and you get drunk and then they arrest you, I get into trouble" He replied, "I never tell, for they arrest you, my friend, after you get me whiskey they get you into trouble."

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When Judge Thomas was judge, he called a Court of Inquiry to find out where they were getting their whiskey and he was unable to get a single case. They would not talk.

About this time, the Indian Agent at Miami purchased a new car for one of the Quapaws and he left Miami driving it and when he reached the Spring River Bridge east of Lincolnville, he turned off the road and turned his car over in the ditch. The car was badly damaged when it was taken out of the ditch. The next day the man returned to the Agency at Miami and told them that the car was no good and he wanted a new one. The Agent asked him if he was drunk when the car turned over. He replied, "Maybe so, had one drink", when the question was repeated he admitted that maybe he had had two drinks and when questioned farther about the number of drinks finally admitted that maybe he was drunk and continued that when he approached the bridge, that the bridge came straight towards him and he turned out to let the bridge go by.

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In all we have had a pleasant, successful life .
and have been able to give our three boys and two
girls each a good education and am still able to enjoy
the friendship of those around me.