

CLEVENGER, W. M.

INTERVIEW

10038

324

BIODIGRAPHIC FORM
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
 Indian-Planner History Project for Oklahoma

CLEVINGER, W. M.

INTERVIEW

10038

Field Worker's name Ida B. LankfordThis report made on (date) February 23, 1938

1. Name W.M. Clevenger
2. Post office Address Cordell, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) Northwest First St.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 30 Year 1862
5. Place of birth Fannom County, Texas

6. Name of Father O.H. Clevenger Place of birth Indiana
 Other information about father _____
7. Name of Mother Mary McFelt Place of birth Indiana
 Other information about mother Housewife

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.

CLEVINGER, W.M.

INTERVIEW

10038

Ida B. Lankford,
Investigator,
February 23, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. W. M. Clevenger,
Northwest First St., Cordell, Okla.

I came to Oklahoma from Wise County, Texas though I was raised in Fammon County, in December 10, 1894, and filed on land eight miles from Cordell, four miles south and four west. We came in covered wagons and were nine days on the road. I drove my cattle through.

While on our way up here, driving our cattle, we asked an old buck Indian if we could cross the line with our cattle. He said "yes", so we crossed and camped for dinner. An agent came by and told us we had to have a pass to cross the line. My cattle were tired and had to lie down, so the agent helped me get the cattle up and then let me go on. I don't know what I would have done if I had had to pay for the pass as I didn't have the money.

I built a rock house covered with dirt and in February, 1895, the worst blizzard came; we almost froze in spite of all I could do.

CLEVINGER, W. M.

INTERVIEW

10038

- 2 -

I tried to farm some; I broke my land with a walking plow and I planted kaffir corn and corn; I made a good crop. The next year I raised cotton and sold it for 5 cents a pound; I sold corn for 10 cents a bushel. I would sell my cotton to the Morris Gin and they would freight it to El Reno. Later, Mr. Summer put a gin in at Cloud Chief and I began hauling cotton to Cloud Chief. Cotton went up and I got 7 cents a pound; I thought I was getting rich at that price.

For my fuel I would go to the creeks and rivers and rustle green wood; what a time I would have trying to make a fire.

There were no roads, just Indian trails. One day Mr. Parker, Mr. Brown and I started for Chickasha to buy flour. A big Indian rode up and asked us where we were going. We told him to Chickasha and he asked what for. When we told him to buy flour he said, "You have to have a pass" so we paid him and went on our journey, but we came back by way of Minco so we wouldn't have to pay again.

We had dugouts for our school and church houses.

CLEVINGER, W. M.

INTERVIEW

10038

- 3 -

We used to have big prairie fires, maybe someone would set the grass after night and almost everything would burn in just a short while because the grass was so high and dry. One night while I was asleep, a man came to my house and said a big fire was about a mile away. I got up we had to do a lot of fighting we did to keep the fire from burning up everything. I had my corn in the crib and all my chickens and everything would have burned if it hadn't been for the man who told me about it. The next day we went over the pastures and saw the cows and calves that had burned to death.

I remember going to a big Indian barbecue and picnic on Washita River close to Cloud Chief. The Indians danced all night. Another time at one of the big festivals at Cordell an Indian Buck ate so many hot entrails that he burst open. They stretched him out in a tent and the rest of the Indians danced around him with Boom-Boom; it was a show for us white folks to watch the Indians. But the Indians were my friends but some of the white men would go out at night and steal the Indians' wood and posts and do other mean things. The mean things were always laid to the Indians.

CLEVINGER, W. M.

INTERVIEW

10038

- 4 -

We had lots of hard times to build up the state of Oklahoma, but we old folks who are left are proud of Cordell, Washita County, Oklahoma. Lots of the old folks that had the hard times and lived without really enough to eat and not enough clothes to wear to keep them warm are gone on to the glory world, where there will be no more hard times. I am old and retired but I still have my farm. I sit around and think and wonder how I did do so much work and how I got through the cold blizzards like I did.