

COGGINS, WILLIAM M.

INTERVIEW

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

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Field worker's name, Robert H. Boatman

This report made on (date) September 21 1937

1. This legend was secured from (name) William M. Coggins

Address Blanchard, McClain County

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

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story ~~a pioneer minister among the cow boys and Indians~~

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 6

Robert H. Boatman
Interviewer
September 21, 1937

Interview with
William M. Coggins
Blanchard, Oklahoma.

I was born in Madison County, Tennessee, April 27, 1848. I spent some few years of my life there.

I moved from there to Arkansas, and from Arkansas I came into Indian Territory in 1890, and have lived here ever since. I settled in what was known as the Choctaw Nation near a small town or post office called Perdie.

I have never been fully able to know just why I came to the Territory at that particular time. There were very few people here when I first came into the Choctaw Nation. I spent one year at or near Perdie, and then moved to Foster. Here I decided to begin some investment in the town of Foster. It was only a very small place in '91, but any one could see that the country was soon to become agricultural, so I built a cotton gin at Foster which was the first ever built in that country.

I sold out my gin and moved to Old Center and decided that a bank was needed. Some few of us secured a Territory Charter and put in the first bank in the town of Fitzhugh.

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As a minister of the gospel I have walked as far as twenty miles to preach. It was very amusing and interesting at times to have church. There were only a few houses that could be used for services. Generally an announcement would pass out that at some given place services would be held. The seats would be prepared some where and I would go over to preach, say at eleven o'clock. The cow boys would begin coming up for service, and they would run their horses around and make them jump the seats. I would always let them have their fun, and when they would get their romp over, I'd call out, "All right boys, time for services." All horses were tied then and the cow boys took their seats with their big bee gum hats, high top boots, big shank spurs and long six shooter guns. They always paid the best of attention.

The Indians were a very peculiar people. Very often Indians would come out to church and never would they take off a hat or speak. They just sat and looked in some direction, although they seemed very much concerned. In my fifty-six years in the ministry I have never been better respected by anyone than I was by the early day cow boys and Indians

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of the Indian Territory.

The principal crops grown in the 90's in the Territory were small patches of corn and cotton. Corn would bring from 10, to 15, or 20¢ per bushel. Cotton sold at from 3 to 5¢ per pound. Good fat hogs were bought from the Indians for 3¢ a pound. The Indians especially the Choctaws didn't care so much for hog meat then. They were very fond of turkey and deer; both of which were very plentiful. Beef was their main food. The meat was barbecued, or dried by being hung on to a tree and then smoked with various weeds and woods. This was done in order to flavor the meat. After drying, it was prepared in different ways for eating. It was generally boiled or roasted, and was sometimes fried in beef tallow.