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Red River
Chickasaw Nation
Madill
Henderson Ferry
Ranching
Farming

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

Field Worker's name Robert H. Boatman

This report made on (date) August 20 1937

1. Name Ezra S. Easley

2. Post Office Address Cole, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day _____ Year 1865

5. Place of birth Texas

6. Name of Father S. F. Easley Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Mary Ann 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 _____.

Robert H. Boatman
Interview,
August 20, 1937

An Interview with Ezra S. Easley
Cole Oklahoma

I was born July, 1865, in the state of Texas and grew up there as a farm boy. As my father was a farmer before me, I naturally knew nothing except farming and hunting. There wasn't much use in farming extensively for there was very little market for farm products.

I came to Indian Territory in 1894. When we needed food we could just pick up a gun, step out of sight of the house and kill a deer, turkey, buffalo, or bear. The buffalo just ran in great herds. They were just slaughtered for their skins. I have seen wagons loaded with buffalo hides six to eight feet high and from six to twelve yoke of oxen hitched to the wagon, hauling the hides to some market. The hides would sell from \$.50 to \$1.50 apiece.

I used to hunt deer mostly and remember one time I was out hunting a deer and looked out to one side of me where the grass was waist high and saw a deer horn sticking up above the grass. Well, I knew he was taking his morning sun, so I got down on my hands and knees and crawled some fifty to seventy-five yards and when I finally I came near there was no deer there, it was only a pair of twelve point horns that had been shed by a buck. The deer shed their horns once every

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year. Later I was on another deer hunt and when I was walking along a trail near some timber/a large tree top had fallen right over a small cave and the hind leg of a deer was sticking up above the edge of the bank. I decided to pull him out and see what was wrong with him so I walked over took hold of the leg and gave a pull. A big panther growled at me. He had killed the deer and pulled him in the hole. I don't know how fast or how far I ran, but I wasn't very much interested in hunting for deer any more in that section of the country.

I married, and in 1894 brought my wife from Texas to the Indian Territory, traveling by wagon and team. Tarpole wagons were in use in those days. The reason they were called tarpole wagons was that the wheel was just run on the end of the axle with a pin through the end of the spindle on the outside to hold the wheel on and tar was used to grease the spindle.

When I crossed Red River near Denison, Texas, it was by fording it. There wasn't a bridge on Red River then.

I entered the Territory and settled in the Chickasaw Nation, some twenty miles south of where the town of Madill is now located. There was a post office there by the name

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of Lark, one and one-half miles from Red River and the postmaster kept a few supplies. The old post office is still continued, although it has been moved about one mile from where it was located when I came to the Territory.

Our trading post was Denison, Texas. When we went to town for supplies we crossed the river at Henderson Ferry. The river was too deep to ford so a ferry was used and is still there at the same place, though a good bridge has been built some few miles down the river.

There were thousands of head of beef cattle in that section of the country.

Jim Bounds was a big cow man. Cattle just ran on the open range and when he was ready to market a bunch of cattle he would always round up the number he wanted and drive them across Red River to the Texas side and sell them.

I took a lease on some land from a Chickasaw Indian, built a log house and began farming. Cotton and corn were the principal crops raised then. The only market I had for corn was when some cow man would buy it.

People didn't know what a barn was then, so the corn was hauled and ricked in long ricks, about eight to ten feet at the base and rounding over at the top. The ricks would often be 50 feet long. Corn sold at ^{cents} .5 to / 20 per bushel.

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In harvesting of cotton, a basket was used to pick in instead of a sack and it was sold at from three to five cents per pound. There was no sale for cottonseed at all, they were just thrown away. Cattle would sometimes feed on them.

I soon saw the agricultural development of the Territory was coming fast and when in 1907 the Territory was admitted to the Union as Oklahoma, I moved to the northern part of McClain County, where I have since lived and continued in the agricultural business.