

the farmers. Ranchmen--the sheepherders and all that.

(They had to go to Darlington to get those payments?)

That was the Agency at that time. Northeast of El Reno and--I mean, west of El Reno and northeast of Fort Reno about a mile and a half.

(Back at that time, if they had any of their land lease out, what kind of money--how much would it be leased for?)

Well, whatever the farmers wanted. They lease the land through the Department of Interior for the Agency Office there--our Agency Office. Oh, it wasn't much. Sometimes get sixty dollars for an eighty. A few got a hundred for good bottom lands.

(That's a year?)

A year, yeah. Some of them made provisions in their leases for a house or something like that--some improvement that they either insert in the lease to be let on the place when the lease expired--if they didn't continue the lease--or some of them would provide in the lease that they would remove the property or sell it. Which in many cases, they were left as an improvement on the land.

(You mean the person that would lease the land would build a house there and leave it?)

Yes. And in a lot of cases the Indians got the improvements on a succession of leases, you know, till the farmer thought he got the value of this improvement that he'd leave on the land--it became the property of the Indian, or the heirs.

JESS'S LAND AND HIS FAMILY'S LAND: HOW USED*

(At that time when you were working at that bank, what was happening to your own land--was it leased?)

Well, my land, I think, as I told you before, was nothing but alkali. Grass grew there but stock wouldn't eat it. And I leased it through my parents--I was underage then, and the man that leased it was a neighbor who had had hay there on the place and the water was alkali but the stock drank it--I think the first time I got eighty dollars a year. Just for his pasture.

*See also T-352 for additional information on the Rowledge allotments and land use.