

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

OLIVER, J. H.

INTERVIEW

10574.

Field worker's name Robert H. Boatman,

This report made on (date) April 26, 1938. 1938

1. This legend was
secured from (name) J. H. Cliver.

Address Blanchard, Oklahoma.

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

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story _____

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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Robert H. Boatman,
Investigator,
April 26, 1938.

Interview with J. H. Oliver
Blanchard, Oklahoma.

I was born in Kentucky October 2, 1862, and lived there till I was twenty-three years old at which time I pulled stakes and, with my wife and one child, packed a few belongings into a covered wagon and headed to what was then known as the Indian Territory.

After several days of very weary travel and about all the luck that goes with a traveler's life I finally entered the Territory, and after some time I settled in the Chickasaw Nation, near Wynnewood.

There I built my first home in the Indian Territory, some three or four miles from Wynnewood. It was what might well be termed a picket house, for it was of small split poles some ten feet in length set two feet in the ground with the split side inside. The reason for this was to have the inside as nearly smooth as possible.

After the walls of this house were completed, the roof was put on, consisting first of a layer of long poles

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laid side by side, then a layer of grass and sod from four to six inches in thickness.

The length of the door was from the ground to the roof and it was made by leaving a small space in the building of the walls. Thus my first home was completed and I settled down for better or worse and never could see how it could be worse, for the country was everything but what I had expected to find.

The reason I settled at this particular place was that Wynnewood was the only place that I could find where I could buy the actual necessary supplies we needed.

I knew no occupation other than farming and there was little or no farming here when I first came, so I was at a loss as to what I could do.

I broke out some sod land and planted my first crop with no conveniences at all on the farm and the only tools were a Georgia stock and double shovel. Of course, the land was broken out with katydids, a kind of mould cut for that purpose and a good yield of products was secured in return. Then I was confronted with another problem, what to do with my crop, for there was no market here for farm

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products. Cotton was hauled to Denison and Gainesville, Texas, and sold at 4¢ or 5¢ per pound. Corn was just stored in ricks and sold to ranchmen for feeding purposes, the ranchmen being the only market we knew for corn. It sold at from 10¢ to 12¢ per bushel.

The family customs were just as they saw fit to make them. If a family lived at any place, well that was their home at which they stayed and attended their own business, for it did not take them long to learn that the business of the other fellow was none of theirs. In case of sickness we nursed our own patients and if a member of a family died, then the other settlers would help bury them if there happened to be any other settlers.

There were no schools and no churches except that a subscription school was held occasionally. The children had little chance of securing an education. I believe this is the reason so many people can neither read or write. Since I first came to the Territory in 1885 I have been engaged in the business of agriculture and now live at the town of Blanchard.