



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

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OHLER, WILLIAM HENRY

INTERVIEW

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Field Worker's name Elizabeth L. Duncan,This report made on (date) January 10, 1938

1. Name William Henry Ohler,
2. Post Office Address Vinita, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 17 Year 1863
5. Place of birth Grandville, Michigan.

6. Name of Father Jacob Ohler, Place of birth Pennsylvania  
Other information about father Served in Civil War 4 years 6 months
7. Name of Mother Elizabeth Reyer Place of birth Maryland  
Other information about mother Stayed at home and took care of

children during rebellion, pioneer of Michigan, 85 years ago.

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 30.

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Elizabeth L. Duncan,  
Journalist,  
January 10, 1938.

Interview with William Henry Ohler,  
Vinita, Oklahoma.

I was born in Grandville, Michigan. My father was a lumberman and farmer; farmed in summer and lumbered in winter. I first started to school in Kent County, Michigan. Father and family moved from Michigan to Des Moines, Iowa, in 1873. Moved with a wagon and team and crossed the Maumee Swamp on corduroy roads made of logs, close to Terra Haute, Indiana, and crossed Lake Michigan at Chicago and saw the first draw-bridge I ever saw in my life. The center span turned around on a pivot to let the sailing vessels through. It was also a railroad bridge. We landed in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1873. There, I went to school at the third ward school. We lived there for fourteen years and I worked at anything I could get to do. I carried in coal and cleaned spittoons and got me a box and shined shoes, also worked in a feed store for two or three years and worked in Ainsworth in Brombright Hardware store as rountabout.

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In 1892, I enlisted in the regular Army. The Strip was opened on September 16, 1893, and I made the Race. I drove a road cart to Hannewell, Kansas, and registered. I had a friend, Pete McPherson, who lived in Floral where I did. We were going to make the Race together, which we did. We drove a team and wagon out to Hannevell, and brought groceries. He drove a trotting horse to a roadcart, and I rode a horse without a saddle. He did not register for a week after I did. He just got registered at 9 o'clock before the Race and we were going to start seven miles east of Hannevell, but he got scared. The horses looked too big and fine, so we went back in Kansas a little way and made the start east of Caldwell about four miles, and there we got in line and it seemed to me there was just as big a crowd there as any place.

I met a blacksmith from Jewel City that I was acquainted with and he introduced me to a man by the name of J. L. Jacobs, also from Jewel City.

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We fell in line and I think the lines were at least twenty-five deep. I was pretty close to the Kansas line. Soon we saw a puff of smoke way east of us, and we heard the report, then they all started. From the west as far as you could see and from the east as far as you could see, there was a sea or stream of horsebackers. I rode a half-blood wild horse which weighed about 1,050. He was not a fast runner, but a long loper and would carry it out for hours. Some in front shot out in full run, some ran half a mile, and some a mile and a half. That way when I commenced to pass the head ones, I heard them say to one another, "Hold your horses, they will soon wind their horses and then we will pass them." But my horse just kept going ahead and finally I got ahead till there were just a few on the west and a few on the east that were even with me. We advanced until we could look back and could not see anyone behind us. Then we struck the brakes of Polecat, east of Renfrow. There were three horses in the trail ahead of me and four on the east just behind me, and the three and myself drew ahead of the four behind me. These three and I rode side by side for a long way and they asked me where I

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was going to locate. I told them down on Pond Creek if I could find it, and they said they would like to get between Pond Creek and Salt Fork. We were then riding over a nice valley of bottom land and there was nice big timber along the creek. We could have taken any claim for the last five or six miles back so I told them if we did not know where we were riding to this land was too good to lose.

The last couple of miles we ran across two horsebackers. We supposed they were Sooners for when we first saw them they ran right off from us, and we never did see any more of them.

I saw a nice big bunch of trees to the east of me and I started for that bunch of trees. One of the three who were on the east of me spurred his horse for the same bunch and threw up his flag in a way that I knew he meant to stake there. I let them all three stake in rotation along the creek and took the next claim along Polecat Creek south of them. Those three men were Texas men. The first one to stake a claim was a man by the name of Boyd, the next one to stake was Hopkins, and the last was O'Bryan. O'Bryan's claim was the northeast quarter of the old Malally Ranch and my

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claim was the southeast quarter of the Malally Ranch, which was Section 5, Township 26, Range 4.

We were there fifteen minutes before the leading horsebackers got there. Then they began coming in, one, two, and threes, then in droves. I had the prettiest laying claim, level and nice, good land on it.

There was a beautiful bottom of a hundred acres or more in it, but there were some quarters next to the creek with more red land than what mine had. The creek was dry at that time and we could see where Sooners had fed oats and corn in the bottom of the creek bed. We imagined they went two or three miles farther towards Salt Fork.

I crossed the creek and set my stake close to the creek on the east side so they could not cut me out of the timber and the nice bottom, and then I took my blanket that I had to ride on and tied one corner of it to a limb of a tree so they could see it far and near.

In about fifteen minutes a horsebacker rode in on the west of me and then I hollered at him and made him understand that I had staked there. He replied that he thought he was far enough to be off of my claim, but if he was not he would get off.

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By that time they were staked pretty close around us in every direction. I followed the creek up north hunting water and as I was going north I met a man coming south afoot. He was carrying an end gate rod. I went on till I found an old well on the next claim north of me. There had been some logs laid across it and some old planks and O'Bryan and half a dozen other men were trying to pull them out of the well with their lariats. We took a canteen and weighted it and put it on a rope and let it sink till it got full of water. We kept drawing water till we all got a drink. That water news spread and I expect there were fifty men there in the next two hours to get a drink.

I started back to my claim and on my way coming back I met the same man. I had met going north and when I got down to where I had staked, I saw the wagon rod with a white flag on it sticking up about sixty rods west of where I had staked. I found out afterwards that his horse had fallen in a prairie dog hole and he walked on down there and staked on my claim.

By two o'clock there were at least thirty-two stakes on my claim. It was some four or five days before we found



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out what section we were in. It used to be the Malally Ranch and they had pulled up the corner stones or rocks and used them for weights on haystacks. We all chipped in and hired a surveyor to find out what land we were on (the surveyor was Captain Grimestead of Wellington, Kansas.)

Then we all started to the land office at Enid. We had to fall in line and take numbers of dates when we could file. My number would put me about six months behind that date so I went back to my claim and started a well and got a team and broke some sod so I could start a sod house.

After that I went back to Floral, Kansas, where my wife was. I had to have my tires set on my wagon and while the man was setting my tires, I dug post holes and fenced a small tract of land in payment for his setting the tires.

Then I drove back to the claim and went to work building on the sod house. Dave Edwards and Charlie Daley both had claims close by. They were helping on the sod house. After I had cooked dinner and we had eaten and were lying down on the ground resting, a well dressed man rode in on a nice horse carrying a Winchester rifle. He stopped close by us and asked if there was a gentleman in that crowd attempting to hold that

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place down. I jumped up and told him that I was, for the simple reason that I had staked that claim fifteen minutes ahead of the leading crowd except the three cowboys north of me.

He said he had staked it first and then rode on down to Salt Fork to stake one for his sister. I told him if he staked the claim the day of the Race and he could prove it by two men who saw him on the claim the day of the Race, I would get off, but if he couldn't, he was to get off. He just laughed at me and rode back west about a quarter of a mile. There he had two men with two wagons, six head of mules, and two breaking plows. They unloaded them and started to breaking sod. That made me mad and I was going out there to put them off of the place but Dave Edwards said, "No, Ohler. If you go out there and raise a fuss with them, he won't have to leave and it will go against you in the contest." He said they would go out with me and for me to forbid the men to break prairie on the place, and tell them if they did, I would not pay them for it. The man just laughed at me, and said he did not want me to pay him.

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that he was breaking it for himself and I could do nothing with him.

The three of us went back and went to work on the sod house. In the middle of the afternoon, the other man rode away on his horse. The men who had come with him broke prairie till almost night, then they drove down the creek in the timber south of where I was building the house and went into camp. We three worked on till sundown, then Charley Daley and Dave went to their claims. I cooked supper and made my bed and lay down. The longer I lay and the more I studied over it, the madder I got. I was wearing a Scotch cap. I got so mad, the blamed thing wouldn't stay on my head and I lost it somehow, and did not find it till the next morning. I had come into the Strip without a gun or pocket knife. I walked down through the timber till I got to within 200 yards of where the men were camped and hollered at them, and they asked me what I wanted. I told them to get up and pull out of this and to go right then. They tried to argue me out of it, saying they were getting three dollars an acre for breaking, that they just wanted to break twenty acres, and if I got it I would have

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that much broke. I told them I would give them twenty-five minutes to load up and get out of there. If they didn't, they would never be able to get out. I told them I had them covered with a Winchester and that I would just give them twenty-five minutes. Now that was one time that I ran a bluff. When I left the sod house I had picked up about a six-foot elm limb or pole. I was standing under a tree and it was moonlight and they could see me, but not clearly. It did not take them long to get their mules harnessed and their bedding in and pull out. They drove up to where they had been breaking, put their plows in and away they went as fast as they could.

About two years after that I met one of them in Medford. He got to telling a crowd of us how he got run off of a claim down on Polecat Creek. He went on to tell how near he came to getting killed down there in the timber. He was an old man about fifty years old then, and his name was Thacker. His son-in-law, Jones, ran a barber shop in Medford.

The next day after I bluffed the men out, I worked at the sod house, then went back to Floral, Kansas. I had two children, a girl and a baby boy. My wife and I loaded them

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into the wagon with some of the furniture. We had two barrels, one for water and in the other we had meat, potatoes, flour, and other groceries, and I loaded what else I could get in the wagon, and then we started for the claim.

We went down through Winfield, and Arkansas City, then out to the Chilocco Reservation and then along the line between Kansas and Oklahoma until we got about four miles west of Hannevall. There we took an angling trail for the southwest and it took us two days to make that trip. We did not get in till pretty near dusk. We pulled in across the creek and camped where I had started my sod house. We got supper, made our bed, and did not wake up till the sun was peeping in our faces in the morning.

The first thing I noticed when I woke up, was a big white card hanging to a string on a limb. That card, written by a man named Frazier, told me that he was down in Enid, and that there was a man got a direct filing on my claim. I was directed to come down as soon as I got back and file a contest--that that was all I could do.

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I had a tent. I staked that up and took the barrel and went up to the Malally Ranch and got a barrel of water and brought it back.

By that time C<sup>B</sup> Bryan had sold his claim north of me to a man named Shatcall and his family. I made arrangements with them for my wife and children to go up there and stay nights while I went down to Enid and filed a contest. I was gone two days. I had to hire a lawyer and I had to put up fifteen dollars at the land office before I could file the contest.

When I came back I worked a few more days on the sod house before I went back to Floral to get my two cows and seventy leghorn hens, and then I drove back to the claim. I had no chicken coop there. There was a big elm tree within about ten feet of the house. It was about two feet through the body. It grew up about eight feet before the limbs spread out and the first limbs grew outside way up. We turned our chickens loose and they roosted in the limbs of that tree.

I built my sod house 18 x 14, had two double windows on each side and two doors, one on each end. I put a good

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shingle roof on it and then we moved into it. That winter I went some ten or twelve miles and got a load of white gyp, dissolved that in water and added sand to it. With that, I plastered the inside all over, then we had a pretty nice warm house. I dug a well and walled it up with rock. We only had to go about eighteen feet deep for water. Then I dug a cave and built a small barn and made a rack between four trees to put feed in and straw.

My next neighbor to the west of me was Rube Payne and he dug a dugout. He covered it flat with roofing boards. The top was about a foot and a half above the ground. He calculated to build on top sometime; his family lived in Corbin, Kansas. He got me to take my team and he took his team and we went up and moved his family down. It consisted of three girls, himself and wife.

When we got back, he moved on my place and put up a tent under some trees. They lived there for about three weeks until he got a barn up and a well dug. He went back to Corbin, along in the winter, and the first snowstorm caught him while he was away. It drifted all around his

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home. You could not see it for the snow filled the entrance where you went down into the house clear full. I went up next morning, it was bright and clear, and shoveled the snow out of the entry with a scoop shovel so they could get outdoors to get some water, and cut them enough wood to last them two days and threw it down to them. By that time, Mr. Payne had gotten home.

In an early day a storm would come and snow with it was very cold, but generally the next morning the sun shone out clear and the snow would melt and disappear about as quickly as it had come.

Nearly all my neighbors had lived in Kansas, or close to the line, and they had <sup>close</sup> friends. If they got out of something to eat these friends could get it for them.

I did not have any friends closer than northern Kansas or Nebraska, and I had sold some of my horses and spent the money and traded one off for two cows. We had those seventy leghorn hens and knew nobody and could not go in debt for groceries, and consequently when we got out of food I had to make a trip back to Floral, Kansas, for grub. I had



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worked for men there who could not pay me in money, but would let me have potatoes, meat, and flour, and some kaffir corn. Meat was cheap, it was only worth about five cents a pound. I had to make between seven and ten trips that winter. Sometimes I waited until our grub was about gone before I started back, and one time in particular, we ran clear out of meat and lard. I had to go to Medford and take four young roosters (late ones) and trade them to one of the first storekeepers in Medford for lard. I left that for my wife and she had a few potatoes and a little flour and she had to make that do till I got back. She had plenty of good cool water and that close to the house, too, and I had plenty of good dry wood for her to burn.

When I went for supplies I took the team and wagon and a little sheet iron stove I had. I put it in the wagon. I also took the tent, it was old by that time, had plenty of holes in it. I went north and struck Caldwell first. I just had 25 cents in money. I put that all into belogna which I bought from Ed Falkenberg who was

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running a butcher shop. I did not eat any of that until night. I had about a dozen and a half hard biscuits (my wife/didn't have any baking powder to make them.) First, that bologna tasted good. It was made out of hot meat with the skin with it. Part of it had been shaved and not scalded, and the bristles would stick in my throat till I could hardly eat it. I would quit for a while, then I got so hungry I would go back and eat till I could not eat any more.

It took me a little over two days to make that trip. The second night I camped four miles north of Winfield on Rock Creek in a low bottom where lots of people had camped. I had a hatchet along and I cut a lot of dry wood, took out the sheet iron stove and put it on the ground and built a fire in it. I had a quilt and the old tent, and I made a bed alongside of the stove, doubled the tent four or five times, laid it down, then put my quilt down on top of it and doubled the rest of the tent over it. I then crawled under it with my coat, cap, and shoes on. That was one of the coldest nights I ever camped out. I thought I had plenty of wood, but I did not have enough to do until morn-

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ing, I fed that stove wood and pretty near roasted on one side and was so cold I pretty near froze on the other side. About two hours before sunup, I got so cold I had to get up. I had no more wood. I fed the horses, than I walked up and down the road till daylight to keep warm and I did not get breakfast. I started on without any. I only had about eight miles to go. I got to the home of a former neighbor of mine by the name of Red Chin. They had had breakfast but they stirred me up some corn meal pancakes and they had some good fat salt pork. How I did eat that, and boy, it was good. They also made some good hot coffee. I got some potatoes, about four or five bushels, and two or three bushels of kaffir corn. One man got me four pounds of coffee (his name was Thomaon), and a man I worked for in the rock quarry let me have seven dollars in money. Then I started back for the claim. The next day about ten o'clock I got to Arkansas City, Kansas, and there I bought a whole sack of beans (100 pounds) for 3 cents a pound. I put the rest of the money into two heavy salt pork sides which I got at 3 cents a pound. It averaged from 2½ to 3 inches through.

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When I got home and got rested up, I took the team and drove about thirty miles (took that kaffir corn with me) and got it ground into flour at the old Drury watermill. Then I went back home and we lived pretty good for a long time on that. But we never made a success of that kaffir corn flour. I gave some of the flour to some of the neighbors.

We did not raise any crop the next year, only some hay. Jeff Casford, a neighbor that lived three fourths of a mile west, on the south side of the road, with one of his brothers, shipped a carload of corn and implements and some hogs. I bought two sheats from him, they weighed about 100 pounds each. There was not much grain of any kind raised that year. I had good blue-stem grass along the creek and I helped Casford put up hay and he helped me. We borrowed a baler and baled it together. We sold it for four dollars a ton. That was the only money I made that year.

We got railroad wheat in that area on time and I also got some wheat from Job Tharp to put in on shares, and the wheat did not make very much. The next year I only got twenty-three or four bushels from forty acres. I paid Job Tharp his

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bushel (half to the acre) what seed I had from him. The railroad wheat I could not pay that year.

I managed to get a pair and fatten one of those sheats and killed her. The other was a sow, so I kept her and bred her. That is where I got my first start of hogs.

Charlie Daley raised a good patch of good turnips that year, and we lived mostly on turnips, fat hogs, and what little flour we could get. Our chickens laid and we raised some chickens the next year.

We did not raise much of anything, and then I got a notice to come down to Fond Creek to pay my railroad seed wheat bill. I hitched the team and went down there and tried to stand them off another year for the wheat, but they said no, the railroad company had to have their money. So I went to the bank there in Fond Creek to see if I could borrow the money to pay off that seed wheat loan. I told the banker where I lived and what quarter section I owned and he asked me if I knew any men there in town. I told him I knew Judge Rogers, Judge of the County Court. I also knew J. L. Godfrey. He said if I could get either one of those

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to go my security, I could have the money. I told him I did not want anybody to go my security, that I had a team, harness, and wagon, and two cows. I went over to the courthouse. Godfrey was sheriff of the county, and he had just left on some business. Rogers was holding probate court. As soon as I could, I told him what I wanted, and he told me just to sit down and in a few minutes when he got done with the court he would go over there with me. He got his hat and went over to the bank. The banker was a big, dark complexioned guy, named McClellan. He asked Mr. Rogers if he would go my security for the money, Mr. Rogers replied that he would. I told him I had said that I could get the money on a note and mortgage if either one of them would recommend me. He replied that it would cost a dollar and a half. I told him I had the money to pay it. I always liked Judge Rogers after that. We had never had any business dealings together and he only knew me when he met me. Of course, he knew where my claim was, and he knew the average homesteader was honest.

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Finally my contest came up. I was notified to come down to the land office for trial. I had to have fifty dollars and I had no money, only eight or ten dollars. There was no bank in Medford at that time. Nine of my neighbors who lived around me, went to Medford with me to help me borrow the money. We finally found a man named Hog Quigley who would loan me the money on ninety days time; he had all these men to sign the note ahead of me. When it came time for me to sign, he said, "I don't know any of these men. Will you get Perry Jones to sign the note with them?" We sent Rube Payne down in a buggy to get him. He brought him up and he signed the note. This man Quigley had known Jones up in Nebraska. I signed the note and walked out in the street and Perry Jones asked me how much interest I paid on that note. I told him 12 per cent on \$50 for ninety days. He said to me, "You paid a lot more than that, you have got \$72 .00 on that note." I walked back in the office and asked him to see that note again, and sure enough it was there. I said, "Quigley, you agreed to loan me that at 12 per cent." "Well," he said, "That

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is what I have charged you." I tried to figure it up and show him, but he would not have it that way. He figured it two or three times and always made it \$72.00. Just then Hopkins, one of the Texas cowboys, came along. I called him in the livery barn that was on the east side of the railroad track. He figured it up and he made it just like I had it. Quigley told me that he had figured it and it came to \$72.00, and he had to have that much money. I gave him his money back and took up the note and I did not know for the life of me where I would get that money. John Elare was running a grocery store there, and I went to him for the money. He said, "Ohler, I would like to help you out but I have been selling a good bit on credit, and it takes all of my cash sales to keep the store running." I went across the street again and met Hopkins and he asked me how I made out with the note. I told him what I had done, and he said, "I am on my way down to Texas and I have left most all of my money with my wife. I have just about enough to pay my expenses down there, maybe a few dollars over, but if you can't get the money any place



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else, just get a plain note and make it out and sign it yourself, and take it down there to Mrs. Hopkins, and she will give you the money." I told him his wife might not know whether I was telling her the truth. He said he would write a note and give me and I could take it to her. He did this and went on to Texas. That made me feel very good so I tried some more, but I could not find anybody who had any money and was willing to lend it to me, so <sup>within</sup> the next day or two, I made out the note, took it down, and got the money.

after I secured the money, Casford hitched up his team; I got eight out of the nine men to go with us and we drove to Edid, and when we got to the land office we found out that they had never got a return card on Freak to show they had served the notice on him, so we had to have the trial stayed off. So, I paid for our dinners and set up the bear several times to the men and the lawyer, then we drove back home and paid the fifty dollars back and got my note.

That contest did not come up for over a year and it sure worried me for I had seen several contests, both in

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Kay and Grant Counties. They could keep a witness on a day or two at a time, time after time. It was 15 cents a hundred words the reporter took and if you ran out of money to pay for this typing, they would call the case down and if the other man had money, you would lose it.

I also found out that this man with the wagon who had staked on my claim had gone to Pond Creek and had tried to file through the mail, but he couldn't do it for he had the wrong number. He went back up to Caldwell and gave it to a man by the name of Freak, a baker by trade. They got a two seated buggy, a nice one, and they drove down on to the claim and took a hatchet and slabbled off the side of a tree and cut his initial on it. Then they started back for Caldwell. They stopped at Satchels, found out the number of my claim, and went back to Caldwell. He went down to Enid and there he bought a number for \$25, and got a direct filing on my claim.

Before the contest came up the second time, Rube Payne had 100 acres of wheat at Corbin, Kansas, and that harvest I took my team and his team and put them on his

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binder and cut that 100 acres of wheat. He and his wife stayed up there and I went home. His girls were on the claim. I kept them <sup>in</sup> wood while he was gone and he stayed and had to thresh that wheat and sell it. He stayed and stayed and did not come back.

It went on till about three days before the contest came up. I took my team and drove to Corbin, Kansas, to see what was the matter with Payne. He had just finished selling that day. He owed me \$50 and paid me that. He said, "I will be down in the morning and will fetch \$250 along with me. If you need it, you can have that." The next day we got the nine men for witnesses and started down there. We all stayed at a rooming house that night. Next morning we were at the land office by nine o'clock, ready for trial. They put me on the stand and <sup>I</sup> swore that I had staked the claim and had done everything the law required me to do, and that my wife and children had stayed there ever since I had taken them to the claim. Then they put on about three witness to corroborate my statements. Freak never appeared against me, so I won the contest. It cost me thirty-five dollars for the typewriting, thirty-

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five dollars for the lawyer's fee and our board while we were there. I had to withdraw \$14 of the \$15 I had put up at the land office for my filing and cancelling of his filing, then we all started for home. I was happy again. I then had a home of my own.

It took all the money I could rake and scrape to make a living and then in May they notified me to come and file on the land. I tried to borrow the money to file on the land and couldn't, so I sold a yearling roan heifer that was fat and nice and a four months old steer calf, a good one, to Pete Falkenberg for \$14.00. They should have been worth \$55, and if I had not had the one dollar in the land office, I would not have had enough to have filed.

There was very little money in the country and very few would buy stock. I still owed \$1.50 an acre to the Government for the land. The next year I got out only seventeen acres of wheat. I did not have the seed wheat to put it in till late, and consequently it only made about twenty bushels to the acre. It very nearly burned up before harvest. The wheat around me made forty bushels to the acre. Webster, up north of me, (corn stalk ground) made fifty

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bushels to the acre, and there was wheat that made as high as sixty-five bushels to the acre. I got mine threshed while it was dry and nice, and put a lot of it in the house and I got 85¢ a bushel for it. The latter part of the threshing was wetter than the first part. I got 4 or 5 cents more than the average. They used my wheat to go with the damper wheat because it was dry. From that time on, we began raising better crops--wheat, kaffir corn, corn and oats.

About seven years after the Opening I got in trouble with one of my neighbors and he called me out to the road and shot me twice. I promised my wife if I ever got well I would sell out.

George Peacock went down to the Choctaw country and bought a farm below Sedan. Dave Edwards also went down there, and they came back and bragged what a great cattle and corn place it was. I had six head of cows then and I was offered \$2500 for my place, so I borrowed Nick Franklin's covered buggy and went to the Choctaw country. They sure had a good crop of corn, potatoes, and everything, and I could buy a good big bottom farm with good barn, house, and

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chicken corps, but I did not have the four thousand dollars, so I stayed at Peacock's and borrowed his saddle and rode horseback all over that country, it was a rough country, trying to find a farm I wanted that I could buy. It took me about three weeks. At last I found a farm of 320 acres. One quarter lay all on the bottom and was all nice farm land except what the creek and timber took out. However, I did not buy the place for I found I could not get a clear title.

The Caddo country had opened up for settlement, and the school land was thrown open for bids. I went down and bid on that school land on three different quarters. I bid as high as \$1500 on one quarter.

All land had raised in value, better than \$2000 a quarter. In a year the place I had sold, sold for \$2,000 more than the buyer paid for it. I had put in seventy acres of wheat before I sold the place and he cut and threshed 1,800 bushels.

I bought the Bill of Sale of the crop on the Nick Franklin farm for \$1,400. I also got a lease on the place for the next three years. I put about \$600 into heifers and calves,

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and I bought a yearling Shorthorn bull from Bill Hurst. He was selling them at \$50 to \$75 apiece. I picked on the one he had picked out to keep himself, so had to give \$75 for him. I raised some good heifers and steers from this bull. The first bunch of steers I sold, I got \$18 a head for them. McConnell, whose place cornered with Nick Franklin's, offered his place to me for \$2,000. I did not buy it because it was low, flat, and full of buffalo wallows. Pete Elswick, who had sold about the time I did over by Lamont, bought it, and got the raise of land. He also bought a poor school quarter. In the two, he made up what he lost in selling and we lived neighbors for three years.

After my three year lease was up I started out to look for land again. I went up around Manchester and around Gibbon, and finally came back within six miles of Bedford and bought Mr. Godfrey's school quarter for \$1500. Afterward, I had to buy it <sup>from</sup> the State, so you see it cost me \$5,000 for the farm. I put out a big orchard and improved it, fenced all around with hogwire. I sold lots of apples from it. I kept that orchard for over thirty years. At the time I sold it, I had paid \$2,800 interest on the place and

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then sold it in the depression for \$5,500. I was badly in debt and afraid I would lose it, so sold it, as they were selling in front of the courthouse every week for just the mortgage. We lived there thirty-five years, then came down to Craig County, to Vinita.

I raised ten children and had lots of sickness and doctor bills to pay. I have not been able to do much work for the last ten years. I bought seventy acres of land a mile and a half from Vinita, fairly well improved, on Big Cabin, southwest, just off of 66 Highway. If I live till the 17th of April, I will be 75 years old.