

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

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**PALMER, H. T.**

**INTERVIEW.**

**13041.**

Field worker's name Nannie Lee Burns.

This report made on (date) February 24, 1938

1. This legend was secured from (name) H. T. Palmer

Address 23 1/2 S. Main Miami, Oklahoma.

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

If Indian, give tribe Miami, Oklahoma.

2. Origin and history of legend or story From memory.

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 13.

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Nannie Lee Burns,  
February 24, 1938.  
Investigator.

Interview with H. T. Palmer  
Miami, Oklahoma.

My mother, Elizabeth Lindsey Palmer was born in the Miami Mission, Kansas, May 5, 1860. My father, James L. Palmer, was a white man, born at Wilmouth, Missouri. At the time of their marriage he lived near Fontana, Kansas, on a farm. They were married in 1880. I, their only child, was born July 22, 1881, at Fontana, Kansas.

My step-grandfather, Chief Thos. B. Richardville of the Miamis, had been largely instrumental in purchasing from the Peorias here in the Indian Country land for his fellow-tribesmen who wished to continue for a few years at least the old tribal life and so here those of the Miamis who did not want to become citizens of the state of Kansas began to come and settle themselves as they disposed of their holdings there.

Grandfather Richardville came with his family in 1882 and located three miles west of Commerce, where he erected a comfortable home for his family and from here the tribal

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affairs were directed. It was not until in 1884 that my father, having disposed of his holdings, came with his belongings to the land he had selected for his family, which is three miles north of Miami. Father drove a big pair of dappled grays to a new wagon and brought other stock and household goods with him.

There was no house or buildings on the land selected and so Dad, with his help, lived in a tent set on the east side of the place and east of Tar Creek.

Mother and I came by train to Baxter Springs, Kansas, in the spring and remained there for a while, seeing my father only at the week ends. With the warm weather, mother insisted on coming here to live and so we came down and that summer our home was the large tent supplemented by a cook shed. The latter was made by setting four posts in the ground and a covering of native lumber boards. Realizing that it was hard to winter here dad purchased a two room attic house and moved it on our land and in the year of 1885, he commenced the building of the present five room house on the farm. We moved into that before it had the partitions set and it was finished as we could.

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In those days this whole country was a great prairie and they were continually driving and grazing cattle here and the only fences were those few which had been placed around the fields as they had been broken out.

One event stands out in my childhood, small as I was that first summer. Mother and I were alone at the tent one day when looking up we saw a wild steer headed straight towards us. She quickly set me up on a salt barrel that was sitting at one of the posts of the cook-shed. She followed me on the barrel and then lifted me to the roof and followed me, and there we remained until those who were trailing the steer arrived and drove him away.

In those early days there was only one house between our home and Baxter Springs, Kansas, and that was a ranch house on Lytle Creek, east of Century.

All of us living west of Spring River traded at Baxter Springs, Kansas, in those days and I was a large boy before I was ever at Seneca, Missouri, but those living east of Spring River all traded at Seneca. Perhaps one reason was the difficulty in fording the streams in those days. To go

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to Baxter Springs we had to cross Tar Creek but we crossed where the Harley Gordon Place now is. Here the ford was wide and shallow and we seldom had any trouble in crossing.

Joe Fish was allotted the land at Century, where then there was a large ranch. With his father, Jack Fish, he tramped the country then. On this land later in the son's life was one of the largest of the lead mines discovered and operated. The income from this mine was thousands per month for Joe. Later a house was built on Elm Creek near Quapaw which was also a ranch house.

Mellon, from Baxter Springs, who ran cattle through this country would each summer cut many acres of the blue-stem grass and stack it in various places. They had one stack-yard near us, at North Miami. This hay was used through the winter to feed the cattle.

The largest ranch near us was the Nailor Ranch. At one time they had a large acreage fenced. Some called it the Big Pasture and others called it the Nailor Pasture. From near where North Miami now is the fence ran two miles west and then north to the Kansas State line and east

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from near us to Spring River and along Spring River to the State Line. The cattle that Nailor handled and grazed here belonged to Joe Baker from Kansas City.

Men who had smaller herds and people like my father who did not have a great number had their grievances in those days. Once I particularly remember the report reached here that the Nailors were bringing in here from Chetopa, Kansas, a big herd that had been brought from Texas. The year before the Texas fever had spread from cattle that had been brought here from there and had killed great numbers on the range and in some instances all but a cow or two belonging to some of the smaller operators. When the news reached the folks living here the neighbors ganged up and waited for them but Nailor got word of their intentions and did not bring these cattle across the Neosho River.

In the fall, when they separated the calves from the cows was a dangerous time to be around, as often a mad cow would turn on the cowboy and attack him. I saw a horse killed by a cow one fall.

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We had to go to Baxter Springs for our mail and one day, our neighbors got to talking and decided to apply for a post office in the neighborhood and father made the application. When the subject of a name arose, some one suggested that they call it Jintown, as the four neighbors talking were, Jim Moore, my wife's father, Jim Newman, Jim Portis and my father, Jim Palmer. The mail came via the Baxter Springs post office and some one would have to drive to Baxter Springs for the mail and usually it was my mother who went unless the weather and roads were very bad. Sometimes she went in a cart and sometimes she drove a team to the spring wagon. She had to drive through the Nailor Pasture a part of the way. There was a gate close to us at North Miami and another gate at the Douthat Hill south of Baxter Springs.

One day mother, accompanied by Mrs. Geboe, a neighbor and friend, were returning when they were chased by the cattle for several miles and the only thing that they could do was to try to outrun the cattle, which their horses did. Father always kept good horses and as a boy I was always around and riding them and so knew the nearby country pretty well.

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The hay land here at that time sold for ten cents per acre. I rode the horse and raked flax for the neighbors. When Miami was started in 1891 and after the first store was established, three miles south of us, I would ride down here to get candy. Fruit was scarce in those days. The store was opened in an old log building that had been a home in Miami and in the yard of the place was an apple tree and I well remember how sick I was one day from eating the green apples from that tree. Some other boys were with me and so I was not alone.

Besides farming, my father was always doing other things. He had a partner, Dr. Mott, from Fontana, Kansas, and every so often my father would start out with five or six new buggies, back of his spring wagon and go through the country here and sell or trade to the people around and in this way he traded for many cattle and horses as well as other commodities. When they quit business they had sold and divided everything but one Indian pony and Dr. Mott gave that to me. I raised six colts from this pony traded two of them to a preacher for a bicycle.



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Two years after that I traded the bicycle to Ern Shriver for a saddle and sold the saddle for \$25.00, which was more than my pony was worth in the beginning.

Uncle Pete Labadie had his home about a quarter from us and it was there that he gave so many big dances. The people would come from Baxter Springs and Chetopa, Kansas, from Seneca and sometimes as far away as Neosho, Missouri, and Vinita. When we finished our big barn, my father gave a big dance and charged a dollar a couple for the dance and the supper that was given at midnight. The supper cost him more than a hundred dollars but he sold more than enough couples to pay the expense of the supper and the music.

I only attended the Quapaw Mission School one winter but when I was small and before there were any school in Miami, Mother stayed at Baxter Springs part of the time with me and kept me in school there and father's sister taught a subscription school one year across the road from us where North Miami now stands. As soon as school was started at Miami, I began to come to school here and rode back and forth from home until my parents moved to town.

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The day that Bill West killed Kenny I was at school in the old Methodist Church about two hundred feet east of the Kenny Shop. We pupils heard the shots and as soon as we were dismissed for recess in the afternoon, we went over to see what had happened, but when the teacher learned what the trouble was she rounded us all up and started us home.

At that time there were no railroads closer than Baxter Springs. Dad hauled Kenny's whiskey from Baxter Springs in a spring wagon. What if the police would see you coming with it across the prairies and your horses were not able to outrun them, that was your hard luck. But in those days there were no telephones and the officers did not have the opportunity to get wise as they have today and it was seldom that they ever saw anyone on the road. After the Federal Officers came here and raided the saloons, the saloon men took the case to the Federal Court and the officers were compelled to pay for the whiskey they had taken and destroyed. It took a special act of Congress to close the saloons

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here. James K. Moore, Mr. Applegate and my father were witnesses in these cases at Fort Smith when the Federal Officers were tried. At one time Miami had four saloons. A man by the name of Hedges was living on Big Knife's place and the Agent had been requested by the Indian owner to put him off, as he had refused to move. Charlie Welch, a Miami, and Amos Valliere, a Quapaw, both Indian Police, went to the home of Hedges. Big Knife was there and they ordered Hedges to open the door. He refused and the police told them he did not they would break it open when Hedges saw that they intended to break open the door he told them that if they did, he would kill them. The police fired and the bullet from Valliere's gun killed Big Knife, who fell across the door. The shot fired by Hedges struck the door-facing and the splinters splintered the neck of Welch, who got into the spring wagon and came to grandfather Richardville's to have it treated. Big Knife lay as he had fallen until that afternoon before they could get together the proper officers and get permission to move him. Valliere served ten years for the killing.

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I was at Pete Stover's Livery barn here the night that was the beginning of Dan Clay's trouble. John Bright, a Miami Indian, and Dan had rented a team and buggy from Stover that day. They had a runaway and the buggy was torn up. They left the team tied up north of town and came to town, and when they told Stover he began to argue with them because of the wreck and that they had left his team tied to a fence. Tom Lewis, the town marshal, was at the barn and Stover asked Lewis to arrest the boys. So Lewis said to John and then to Dan, "Consider yourself under arrest?" Dan called John aside and said something to him and then Dan walked out of the barn saying, "I am not going to jail!" From the street in front of the barn he said, "I am a d-- mean hog and I don't care where I root!" The barn stood where the Telephone Exchange Building now stands. Dan walked east and then southeast across the present Court house square, then east towards the turntable which is south and east of there. At the corner of the court house square, Dan took a pony from a boy and rode on it. Meanwhile, Lewis went home and got his winchester and when he

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came back to Main at South First and Main, he said to a bunch of us boys who were following at a distance and watching, "Which way did he go?" Someone told him and he appropriated Roy Beers' spotted pony and rode after Dan. Dan saw him coming and when he reached the turntable he got off his horse and, placing himself on the opposite side of the turntable, waited. Some three or four shots were exchanged between the two and then Dan backed off down the drainage ditch and to the ~~o~~ corn field and disappeared into the corn field. Friends of Dan got him to give up to the officers and they took him to Muskogee and finally brought him back here for trial. Someone was guarding him at Joe Jordan's place, then a hotel, now the Berkshire residence, and had his foot chained to the bedpost. That night Dan got away.

Later, Sanford Pooler, Charlie Harvey and I were standing in the front of the Harvey Grocery when Dan came in. Pooler, Clay and I walked out on the front porch or walk and looking up to the north saw John Locke, the United States man, coming that way and Pooler said, "There

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comes Locke, you had better go out the back way." Dan stood still and met Locke when he came and Locke put out his left hand to shake hands with Dan and Dan also put out his left hand and Locke tried to grip Dan with his left hand. Then Dan drew his gun with his right hand and knocked Locke down and stepped straddle of him. Then Harvey ran out to where Dan was standing and said to Dan, "My God, don't kill him! Dan stepped off and walked off to the east and looked back once.

My father had now bought an interest in the livery barn with Stover and the night that Dan was killed, that day I had been driving a drummer and was late getting back from Oswego, Kansas. After I got in, someone came to the stable and said they had shot Dan Clay and that he was across the street in Dr. McWilliams' office. As I went to the cafe for something to eat, I stopped and went inside the door and there he lay on a table. Then I went on.

December 31, 1901, I married Ada L. Moore, the daughter of Mary I. Labadie Moore, a Miami, and James K. Moore, a white man. Her parents had been married March 25, 1877, and

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we had always been neighbors, as her father ran cattle on the prairies here and they, like ourselves, had begun in a very small way here. Their first home had been a one room log house, but later they, too, had a nice home and her father served this county as State Representative from here for two terms. In contrast to my childhood, we have raised a large family of children.