

PAYNE, BOB

INTERVIEW

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INTERVIEW Form A-(S-149)

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

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt

This report made on (date) March 18 1938

1. Name Bob Payne

2. Post Office Address Hebart, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 27 Year 1870

5. Place of birth Gley County, Missouri

6. Name of Father George Payne Place of birth Tennessee

7. Name of Mother Sadie Springer Payne Place of birth Missouri

Other information about mother Pioneer Mother. Mr. Payne

~~know little of her people, as she died when he was small.~~

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 7.

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Ethel B. Tackitt
Investigator
March 18, 1938

Interview with Bob Payne,
Hobart, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

I was born in Clay County, Missouri, March 27, 1870. My father, George Payne, was a native of Tennessee, and served as a Confederate Soldier under General Shelby four years in the Civil War. My mother, Susie Springer Payne, was a native of Clay County Missouri, and was a typical pioneer mother. She died in Clay County, Missouri, when I was six and one half years old, and my father and I continued to live there until we came to the Indian Territory.

On New Year's Day of 1880, Father and I got off the train at Vinita, then the Cherokee Nation, now Craig County, Oklahoma. I remember quite well there were two small wooden depots, each on its own right-of-way, but opposite each other just above where the Missouri, Kansas and Texas was crossed by the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad. Between the two depots was a platform, I would call it, built of bricks. There were all kinds of people there to see the train come in; Indians, some with their long hair and blankets, some with painted

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faces, beads and feathers; trappers, hunters, freighters and cowboys, as there were many very wealthy cowmen in that section. Also, there were many Cherokee Indians, rich, honorable citizens and educated. However, there were to be found some of the toughest characters on earth, as the railroad had made a crossing there in 1872 and all kinds of people had followed the railroad there.

The town was a collection of wooden buildings on each side of muddy streets. There were board sidewalks in front of some of these, and there were to be found dives of all kinds.

There was a little restaurant called "The Half-Moon" which had stood on the right-of-way platform for years and the railroad men, and everybody else that wanted to, ate there. It was known far and near as one of the toughest places to be found and as time went on an effort was made to get rid of it, but for some reason, it seemed that it could not be done. So, one night at midnight a freight train of flat cars on the Missouri Kansas and Texas Railroad pulled into the yard, the crew fastened log chains around "The Half-Moon", proceeded to pull it off the right-of-way out into the street and then went merrily on

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their way. No shooting took place as it was all over too quickly and nothing was damaged and "The Half Moon" did not move back on the right-of-way.

Shooting and killings were very common in those days but not in the way we so often are led to believe, for the man who went about waving his gun and purporting to make somebody dance always met his match and did not last long. People minded their own business, and looked out for the bad characters.

My father had some horses and cattle and he rented land from Bill Davis, who was a squaw-man, and lived on Duck Creek but our place was four and one half miles Northwest of Vinita on Little Cabin Creek. Our house was of native lumber and we farmed as well as ranched there three years. There was not another house in sight and there were no roads except wagon tracks that wound through the country, and trails which were used by people on horseback for that was the way most everybody went places. When we came to a fence we did not look for a gate, but got off our horse and took our hatchet, as most all cowboys carried a hatchet with a staple puller on the back for

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the purpose of repairing fence where needed, and proceeded to pull the staples out of the post, stood on the wire forced to the ground, while any well trained saddle horse would step carefully over the wire without striking a foot. Then the wire would be stapled back to the post. So, what was the need of a gate? This was cowboy custom everywhere: never leave a bad place in any pasture fence nor a gate open. A first class cowman would always push another man's cattle toward home, but there were numbers of fellows, who on finding an unmarked and branded calf past six months old, called it a maverick and proceeded to brand it for themselves. These were the cow thieves.

Our friends were John and Jim Crunerman, Cherokee Indians, who lived on Horse Creek, both fine fellows owning large tracts of land and much stock. Also, Charlieorks, an Indian preacher and a good one.

On Horse Creek, Fayette Courtney, a white man, who had an educated Cherokee wife, owned a great amount of land and at the crossing was a little town called Needmore with a store, black smith shop and a few houses.

On Grand River was an old crossing called Cary's Ferry, and later they built a bridge and put in a store and called the place Echo Store. Sometime after this, one of the Cary boys was out near the middle of this bridge and it gave way, falling into the river. The timbers caught and crushed the boy, but with a desperate effort they got him out before he was drowned, but he was so seriously injured that it was four or five months before he could get out of bed. This was above where the big new dam is to be located on the Grand River.

I was well acquainted with the Dalton Brothers Bob, Gratt and Emmett, before they turned desperadoes and when they were serving as Deputy United States Marshals. They were white men, and fine looking with pleasing personalities, and the story then told of their turning outlaws was that the deputy under whom they worked, refused to pay them the money they had earned. They forced him at the point of guns to pay the money, thereby getting into trouble with the Law. After that they were chased and became desperadoes whose deeds are known all over Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas.

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While the Dalton Brothers were at the height of their career in this locality, Dr. Bagley, who was a physician at Vinita, was passing through the swamps down on Pryor Creek driving his ponies and buggy as was his custom, when he was overtaken by Bob and Gratt Dalton, who told him that he was to go into the swamp with them. There was nothing else to do, so he went without any objection. When he reached their hide-out, he was shown a wounded man and after examining him, Dr. Bagley told them that there was no hope for him to live as he had been shot through the intestines but he would give him medicine for ease. They kept the Doctor through the night, treating him with courtesy and the next morning when he could give no further aid, Emmett Dalton gave him \$100.00 and told him never to mention where he had been or where their hide-out was located, and he would be safe, but if he should tell anything about it, they would rob the Vinita Bank and destroy the town. Then he sent a guide with the Doctor and put him on his road home.

When Dr. Bagley reached home everybody wanted to know where he had been so long and his partner, Dr. Fortner, joked

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him about his stay but nobody could get anything out of him. After the Dalton boys were killed at the Coffeyville, Kansas, Bank Robbery, Dr. Bagley publicly told his experience and all his friends appreciated his wisdom in keeping quiet as Emmett Dalton had directed.

I continued to live in the vicinity of Vinita until 1890. Then with three other fellows I made a trip in a wagon through Oklahoma and Colorado and finding no country which appealed to me like Oklahoma, I returned to Okarche, where I remained until the opening of the Kiowa and Comanche Indian Territory in 1901. Then I came to Hobart and paid the freight on the first bus to be put in the transfer business in Hobart. It came from El Reno and was a big, white horse-drawn bus and I drove it for many years. The automobiles have put me out of business, but I am still living in Hobart, the county seat of Kiowa County.