

PAXTON, IONA GEAR

INTERVIEW

#9108

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

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Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt,

This report made on (date) October 25, 1937

Lone Wolf, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

1. Name Mrs. Iona Goar Paxton
2. Post Office Address Mrs. Wheeler Paxton, Jester, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) Jester, Oklahoma.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 12 Year 1877.
5. Place of birth Palo Pinto County, Texas.

6. Name of Father Richmond Bledsoe Goar Place of birth Mississippi.

Other information about father came to Texas as a youth.

7. Name of Mother Josephene Brewer Goar Place of birth Texas.

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

**Pioneer Family of Texas.**

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 Eight.

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Ethel B. Tackitt, Investigator  
October 25, 1937.

Interview with Iona Goar Paxton,  
Jester, Greer County, Oklahoma.

I was born in Palo Pinto County, Texas, October 12, 1877.

My father, Richmond Bledsoe Goar, was born November 23, 1840, in Mississippi, but came as a young man to Texas.

My mother, Josephene Brewer Goar, was a native of Texas and came of a pioneer family. She was born in 1858, in Hunt County. My parents were married in 1876.

They moved our family from Palo Pinto County, Texas, to Old Greer County September, 1887.

We crossed Red River at Doan's Crossing following the trail left by the few wagons and cowboys who went to Quanah, Texas, for the big cow outfits located farther over in Old Greer County.

We had a covered wagon, some bedding, clothing, food and cooking utensils. Not the aluminum kind which I now use on my oil stove or gas range but these

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were a long handled frying pan, a skillet and lid also some black iron baking pans to be used at such a time as we might be able to haul a cook stove from Quannah. Until then we would cook on a camp fire or a fireplace.

We brought some dishes and other treasured articles from our home in Texas but not a great many as hauling space and weight had to be taken into consideration when moving a family over so many miles in a wagon with no worked roads and the condition of the quicksand in the two mile wide Red River valley had to be taken by guess.

There were many tales among the people of wagons and their contents that had been swallowed up by the quicksand to say nothing of the bones of cattle and horses by the side of some of these small water holes which bore evidence all too plainly of the truth of these stories.

Father brought four head of horses, some milch cows and chickens with us but it was late in September and we had nothing whatsoever with which to feed any of

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them. The grass was fine over the face of the country but there were hundreds of head of stock that roamed in every direction with nothing to stop them wherever they might want to drift - to Texas, Kansas or the Indian Territory, and we dare not let them get among these stock if we ever expected to see them again. So we herded our stock as best we could.

Father staked out a section and called it his claim where the town of Eldorado, in Jackson County, is now located. In fact, part of the town is on the very land we claimed. There was not a living person nearer than seven miles at that time. It was open prairie in every direction with nothing in sight but hundreds and hundreds of cattle and horses with prairie dogs and coyotes thrown in for good measure along with the rattlesnakes and polecats.

Father made a small one room dugout as soon as possible for we knew all about the blizzards which rolled like a big black cloud from the north.

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The dugout was simply a hole in the ground with a ridge pole across the top and smaller poles placed with the end on the logs laid around the hole and the other end on the ridge pole, some bark laid over this with small branches and covered with dirt and a dirt floor. We were glad to move in and lived here all Winter.

Something had to be done about feeding the cows and horses. There was no feed to buy and no money to buy with had there been feed in the country, so Father took the wagon and with the help of us children gathered load after load of mesquite beans which grew in abundance on the small mesquite bushes which grew in the valleys. Mesquite never grew to be large trees in that part of the country. We had to protect these beans to keep the outside stock from eating them up as fast as we hauled them. So we cut mesquite brush and built a fence making a

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pen to put them in. We had no wire or rails, only the mesquite brush woven and piled together until it made a fence. We stacked the mesquite beans in the pen and fed them to our horses and cows all winter.

Father plowed a small patch of ground and planted turnip and mustard seeds which we had brought from Texas and again we had to cut brush and build a fence to keep the stock from tramping the ground so hard they could never come up.

The turnips and mustard came up and grew fine that Fall and as the mesquite beans made our cows give great quantities of milk, we had plenty of butter also. We children had to constantly watch the stock to keep them from tearing down the brush fences.

Father got some work to do for the big cow ranch seven miles away. This was the (L) or Half Circle L Ranch, owned by Lem Melton and his

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father. In this way he made enough money with which to purchase flour and such other foods as we needed. The cowmen were always kind enough to give us beef when they killed for themselves.

Father hauled supplies and \* \* \* from Quanah, Texas, for this ranch and others and built fences and corrals for them and later on Mother would furnish meals for the passing cowboys and line riders at twenty-five cents a meal. The cowboys were always glad to get a chance to eat family cooking and would ride out of their way to get to our dugout for a meal. This helped us to live and as there was no regular way for us to have money coming in Father would cut wood and haul it to Quanah to be burned in stoves. There was little coal used at that time, even in Quanah.

In those early days the marks of the great buffalo slaughter in the '70's yet remained and the face of the country was literally strewn with

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bones bleached white by the sun and wind. These could be sold for a very good price for those days and with the help of us children, Father would gather wagon loads of these bones, haul them to Quanah, sell them to the bone buyers who made a business of them, and bring home food for his family. We were never hungry but Father and Mother managed many ways until we could get crops growing enough to bring in money.

It was years before any other white people settled near us. The Kiowa and Comanche Indians would often come by and stop on their way to Texas or when on hunting trips.

We always feared them and were frightened when they came but they never harmed us in any way as we let them alone.

My parents reared eight children and spent their lives in Oklahoma. We, their children, have reared our families in Oklahoma also and we appreciate the honor of being numbered among Oklahoma pioneers.