

HUDSON, NORA

INTERVIEW

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Zaidee B. Bland

This report made on (date) August 19 1937

1. Name Mrs. Nora Hudson

2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 505 W. Broadway

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 24 Year 1877

5. Place of Birth Limestone County, Texas.

6. Name of Father F. C. Barry Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about father Ranchman

7. Name of Mother Mary J. Griffeth Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about mother

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 11.

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Zaidee B. Bland, Interviewer
August 19, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Nora Hudson.

My father had several grown boys and needed more room for them as well as for his stock and horses. He sold out in Limestone County and came north to Vernon, Texas. He chartered a car and brought his stock, horses and mares with him, and household goods, too. He and the boys unloaded the cars in Vernon and going to a wagon yard made arrangements for Mother and me to stay until they could cross the river and find someone who would relinquish his claim and Father and the boys looked around to file if there was any claim that had not already been filed on.

Father found a man, seven miles south and one mile west of Vernon, who would relinquish for fifty dollars. There was only a dugout on the place. It was beautiful rolling land. The grass was as high as a man on a horse. Salt Fork was not more than a mile away.

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Father and the boys came back to Vernon and loaded Mother and me into the prairie schooner with our household goods. The boys took the horses on ahead, except the ones which were hitched to the covered wagon. When we got to Red River it was bank-full. To cross was out of the question so we camped there for several days. Then some one showed Father how to take the horses and make them mill in the river and make it safe for the wagon to cross. The horses had to swim in the middle of the stream and the water ran into the wagon. I remember how frightened I was. The water looked dangerous. It was as red as blood and did not run along like any water I had ever seen but came in big jerky waves that would break and boil and whirl.

School

There was a school real near us at Prairie Hill. We only had three months' school out of every year

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but every one studied and we all learned. There was always a singing school sometime during the year as well as a writing school. Father always had us attend all of these schools and we were as well educated as any one in our country.

My Chum

Right across the road from us lived the Dunningwood family. They had only one child, a girl, my own age, named Grace.

She and I became fast friends. We each had a horse that was our very own and we were allowed to go where we wished over the prairie. We learned to be expert with the lariat and could single out our yearling and rope and hog tie him, or drag him along to where he was wanted, as well as any man. We dearly loved to hunt for cattle bogged in the quicksand and pull them out. We would throw our rope over their horns; if we had a man's saddle, we would pull a cow

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out by hitching the rope to the horn of the saddle; if we had our side saddles, we had to fix the rope around the horse's neck so the pull would be on the horse's chest and would not choke him down. Sometimes the cow would ^{be} so weak, we would have to pull her to the shade and would have no trouble getting our rope off and then again the cow would come free from the sand ready to fight and we would have to cut our rope loose. I guess we were in danger a lot of times but we enjoyed it all and felt like we saved a lot of cattle the boys did not have time to hunt up.

After the big flood in 1892, it was dangerous to ride just anywhere over the plains for pools of water would be hidden by the grass and many times before we would think about it, our ponies would sink to their bellies in the sand and we would have

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a hard time helping each other out.

Sometimes we would have to get off our horses and wade in to help the cow out of the sand. We taught our horses to obey our voices when we would say "Set" or "Pull" or give any of the commands that were necessary.

I had one brother who was a trainer of horses. He trained them with a whip that he would pop with each command. When he had a horse trained so that he could go out on the range, call him and pop his whip and the horse would step out from the herd, he would lift me onto the horse's back and the horse would put his head over my brother's shoulder and follow him anywhere. When all this would happen the horse was considered gentle enough to sell.

Gracie and I enjoyed riding the horses as much as Brother enjoyed breaking them. Gracie and I never went alone but always together. We would

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go in groups of three or four couples to almost all the parties and picnics. Grace and I preferred going horseback to any other way we could go. I had a sorrel Spanish mustang and no horse in the country could out single-foot her nor out-trot her and I cannot remember that any horse ever out-ran her. Her name was Holly.

My father-in-law was a preacher and a teacher. He came into this country as a surveyor and a teacher of penmanship. I met my husband at a writing school. My father-in-law was born and educated in England and some of the Western ways he could never learn. He never learned to dress himself without help nor to harness a horse. Lots of people thought him unfriendly, for he would finish his sermon, reach for his hat, get into his cart and drive away. If

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you wanted him to have dinner with you, you would have to ask him during the week. He insisted that twenty minutes was long enough for any man to preach. I believe he could say more in twenty minutes than any one else I ever listened to could say in an hour. His church gave him a nice buggy seated cart and he was determined that he would learn to hitch his horse to it himself. So, one day when he wanted to go somewhere, he went out and hitched the horse into the shafts with the horse's head toward the seat of the cart and did not know what was wrong with the horse.

The one pastime which he loved was to have money changed into five and ten cent pieces and find a bunch of children and toss the coins up and watch the children scramble for them.

Some one gave him an old mule that could travel fine but there was not a rope that would hold her if

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you tied her by the neck; she would pull back and break it or failing that, she would bite it in two. The only way she would stand at all was to be tied by the foot; she seemed to think there was nothing she could do about it if her foot was tied and would stand all day patiently if tied by the foot.

I could rope a steer more quickly than my husband could. Once, when he and our neighbor, Mr. Harris, had been trying almost all the morning to rope a yearling without success, Mr. Hudson said to Mr. Harris, "Of course my wife is out of practice now but I'll bet she has seen the day she could rope that steer, the first throw?" Mr. Hudson called to me and explained what he wanted. The yearling weighed about two hundred pounds. I took the rope and said, "You all don't hold your loop open enough; see, how I hold mine. I am going to throw and I'll ~~rope his horns the first throw; you may stand by to~~

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catch the rope for I do not want to hold him".

I threw and caught the yearling at the first throw. I could not hold him. When I was a child I could throw my arm out of joint at the shoulder and thought it great fun to do it and see the astonishment on all faces when it would pop back with a loud report. As I grew older, so many things that I would do would pull my arm out of place that finally I would have to send for the doctor to have it put back and it was not funny then. Because of this I could not hold the rope after I had roped an animal.

Medicine.

There was a drug store at old Frazier and there were barrels and barrels sitting around and I often wondered what was in them so one day I found out. My

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older brother was ill and had gotten so weak and spent that the doctor was asked to come out and see him. The doctor came into the house and took one look at my brother and said, "By George, that boy is dying, get anybody that can run a horse over to the drug store for whiskey? We have got to give him a whiskey bath."

Father said, "I have a girl that can make it as quick as any man."

When I got to the store, I found out what was in all the barrels. The doctors prescribed whiskey for any ailment in those days. It was about the only medicine any one needed.

The drug store was the place where all the cowboys gathered at night to spin yarns. One night a stray cat came in and every one had to pet the cat. In about twenty one days there were a dozen cases of smallpox reported and every one said that that

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cat had carried the/germs of smallpox to the drug
store where it was spread.