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INTERVIEW WITH JOHN E. HUGHES
Route 2, Mangum, Oklahoma
Ruth Kerbo, Field Worker
May 18, 1937

John E. Hughes was born February 6, 1873, at Rosebud, Falls County, Texas. His father, David Henry Hughes, who was born in Illinois, fought in the Civil War. His mother, Margaret Clapp, was born in Texas.

Mr. Hughes came through Greer County in 1887, driving 25,000 head of cattle across the country to Kansas. They followed the Old Mobeatic Trail from Doan's Crossing at Red River, through the present site of Mangum, and on northwest. Water holes were scarce in this new country. Some of the men would ride ahead of the herd to locate watering places for the cattle. This was a long and tiresome journey, and after reaching Kansas, Mr. Hughes went back to Texas where he stayed until 1898. He then came back to Greer County, seeking a home. Mr. H. C. Cole and family came with him. They had heard about the cheap land and that a man had an opportunity to raise cattle as there was plenty of grass for pasture.

Covered wagons were the only means of travel in those days and besides the wagon and team of horses, they brought

along with them, a buggy, three mules, a home made table and chairs, and a cook stove. A skillet with a lid was used to cook their food in on the camp fire.

Mr. Cole and family and Mr. Hughes settled on a farm three and one half miles west of Russell or one half mile west of the Goodwill School.

Mr. Hughes worked for K. W. Lanford for fifty cents a day, single handed and Mr. Cole received one dollar a day with his team. They also bought corn from Mr. Lanford for fifty cents a bushel to feed their stock.

There was a large dug-out on the place, sixteen feet wide and twenty-two feet long. It was three feet in the ground and a three foot framework above the ground with windows in the sides; had a shingle roof and a door which stood upright. "This type of dug-out was called the dog house type", Mr. Hughes said.

Money was scarce and food was hard to get. We ate prairie chickens, prairie dogs and rabbits, and roasted wheat bran and corn meal bran for coffee. This made a pretty good drink, too. We hunted around and got grubs for fuel. Made good crops of cotton, corn, sorghum and maize. Cotton was ten cents a pound, corn was forty cents and fifty cents a bushel, hauled to Quanah.

We got our supplies from K. W. Lanford's store, called

Rynklesok then.

We cut cane on the halves for Mr. Lanford for feed and had plenty of milk cows. Mr. Lanford was the first man to break out any land in the country.

We went to parties, ice cream suppers and singing at the different homes. Some people would walk or go on horse back and often a bunch of young people would go together in wagons for several miles to these gatherings. A bunch of them would sit in the back of the wagon with their feet hanging out. The girls wore long cotton check dresses with full skirts and wore split bonnets and rough, heavy shoes. "They didn't wear slippers then", Mr. Hughes said. The young men wore their high standing celluloid collars, bow ties and most of them wore overalls. A few of them wore tailored suits. These were called the dudes. Most of the young folks went barefooted until they were grown. "We all wore a mustache them days, too", Mr. Hughes said. Broad brim hats were also very fashionable for the men.

"When I first came here, Mr. Cole and I were hauling freight from Quanah. It came a big rain and we were nine days making the trip. The Red River was at the flood stage for four days. We camped at Straw crossing until the river was

safe for us to cross.

In those days we would take oak bark or oak wood and boil it for an hour or two and use the water in which it was boiled for dye. It would make a dull red color and was permanent.

"I know all of the fords in the country", Mr. Hughes said.

"Straw Crossing was on Red River near Quanah. It cost a dime to cross on the straw crossing. It was called Straw Crossing because some men had hauled straw and put on the road to keep the heavily loaded wagons from sticking in the sand or mud. Straw had been piled on the road until it was higher than the surroundings."

"The Kelsey Crossing was south of Reed on Salt Fork River This was on the Kelsey Ranch."

"Porter Crossing was one mile east of the Kelsey Crossing."

"Lee Crossing was one mile east of the Porter Crossing."

"Mulberry Crossing was north of Old Blake on the Salt Fork River."

"Woody Crossing was six miles north of Russell."

Mr. Hughes filed on a one hundred sixty acre claim December 13, 1898, located sixteen miles southwest of Mangum, where the Wild Cat Store is now located. He lived on his claim as long as he could get work. He went back to Texas intending to stay only a short time, but got sick and was unable to return to his claim at the time he should have been on it and another man took possession of it. He lost his claim entirely and the fifteen dollars he had spent on it.

Mr. Hughes has never married, lives with his brother and still works around at anything he can get to do pertaining to farm work.