

PHILLIPS, WARFIELD*

SECOND INTERVIEW

7297

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BIOGRAPHY FORM
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
 Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma
 PHILLIPS, WARFIELD SECOND INTERVIEW #7297

Field Worker's name W.T. Holland

This report made on (date) August 26, 1937

1. Name Warfield Phillips

2. Post Office Address Tulsa, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 1515 West Archer

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 16 Year 1867

5. Place of birth Bakerville, North Carolina.

6. Name of Father - Place of birth -

Other information about father

7. Name of Mother - Place of birth -

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 7.

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W.T. Holland
Field Worker
August 26, 1937

An interview with Warfield Phillips,
old timer, 1515 N. Archer, Tulsa, Okla.

I was born in Bakersville, North Carolina, June 16, 1867. In 1891, a bunch of young men of my community and one or two over the line in east Tennessee, decided that the Golden West was the place for us, and California, our destination. We agreed to meet at Morristown, Tennessee, and start from there. This was in February 1891.

According to agreement, we met at Morristown, but there my plans were more or less changed. I saw a map on the wall of the depot and tracing out various places, saw the name Vinita, Indian Territory, sticking up there and somehow I was impressed with the idea of stopping there. I told my buddies of my idea, they didn't agree, but said they were going on through and I told them, I was getting a ticket to Vinita, and if things looked as though they would suit me, I would stay, otherwise, I would buy my ticket there for the remainder of the trip.

I got to Vinita early in the morning, ate breakfast,

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looked about a bit and decided I would go further on, down to Tulsa. So, I boarded a train there, a mixed cattle, freight and passenger train with the passenger coach at the rear of train, and lit out for Tulsa, and got there February 18, 1891. It was a little after sunup when we started and believe it or not, it was good dark when we reached Tulsa. The train would stop to load and unload cattle, and freight, to shoot prairie chickens to take on and put off passengers just anywhere, so it took all day to make the trip. When I got to Tulsa, I had been without sleep for several days, that is real rest, so I went to Aunt Jane Owen's four roomed boarding house, and secured a bed, and told them not to call me at all, as I was dead for sleep and didn't want to be disturbed until I fully caught up with my sleep.

I slept that night, all the next day and the next night, when Aunt Jane becoming uneasy about me, called me on the second morning. That was some sleep, but I felt better. I looked about for a place to eat, as breakfast

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time was over at Aunt Jane's. I crossed over a twelve foot ditch on a plank and found a store where I got some grub. I didn't like the looks of things though and decided I would go on. I was told I could get a stage-coach out of Red Fork going to the Sac and Fox reservation, or agency, where I could board a Rock Island train to continue my western trip. Well, it seems I was destined to stay in Tulsa, for I made three different attempts to get passage on the stagecoach and the third time did get a seat, but a lady came up and wanted so badly to go, that I surrendered my place to her. So I did not go any further west.

I returned to Tulsa, when I got acquainted with Jeff Archer, pioneer merchant, and got a job with him. I worked in his store and also built houses for him. I was a carpenter, and, for that matter still am, and active at the job. Mr. Archer sent me up into the Osage Country, where he had contracts to build some houses for the Indians. This was my first experience with Indians and was very interesting. I built twelve dwellings or houses for the

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Indians.

One, the largest and best house, had seven rooms. I built this house for the Osage Chief, named "Tall Chief." The other houses, all frame, had mostly four rooms and some had seven room houses. I worked for Mr. Archer until time to make the run into the "Strip."

I got up a team of horses, and a spring wagon, a sheet and a camping outfit and some supplies and started to Stillwater, where we had to register. The United States ferry, maintained by the Government was probably two miles above the mouth of the Cimarron, on the Arkansas, and at this time, and before for years, had been operated by Sherman and Ed Ackley, brothers, fine dependable men, and ferrymen. They had good equipment too, but this was not available to the public for the run. We had to use a ferry, one mile below this United States ferry. This lower ferry was operated by a Creek Indian one-armed Chesley Starr. Of course, he had help, as he couldn't do much with one hand.

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This ferry was about one mile above the mouth of the Cimarron River.

About two days before the day of registration, I reached this ferry, and beheld a sight. There were between four or five hundred wagons waiting to cross and the rate was a round trip every hour. I saw this would never do, for they couldn't get half of them over in time to register, so I suggested to Starr in order to rush matters, that he crowd the wagons on and let us take the horses over. He wouldn't agree to that so I got busy myself as I was determined to get to Stillwater, and knew if I kept my place in the line, I would never make it in time. I was familiar with the river, and knew, or thought I knew, that by going down to a place some distance from the ferry I could go at an angle, reach a sand bar which was hidden from view, and ford the stream. I decided to make the attempt so I drove on past the others, down the bank, hugged the bank and gradually turned across until I hit the sand bar, and made it fine. Well, sir, when I got

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across, and looked back, the river was full of wagons and teams. They fell right in behind me, and more than four hundred wagons crossed and the last I saw of Charley Starr, he had tied up the boat, as he had no customers.

I didn't do that to deprive Starr of any business, but I knew from my place in the line, and the rate at which he was ferrying, that I would never "make" it in time to register, but for quite a while Charley wouldn't speak to me.

That night, after crossing we didn't make it to Stillwater but camped on the Bar X Bar ranch; there were probably four hundred wagons of us, and we were near Wildhorse creek. I know we had water for the stock. The next day when we got to Stillwater the line was two and one-half miles long; the weather was dry and hot with dust ankle deep and water scarce. I know I paid 25cents for a glass of water.

I was in line for two nights and one day, and when I finally registered, I had only one day in which to get back over the line for the run. The land agents finally put in extra booths and speeded up registration so all could get

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back over the line.

One interesting incident happened at Bar X Bar ranch. There were plenty of deer on the prairie there, and the influx of this vast horde of teams and wagons, stampeded these deer to such an extent that one deer ran into camp, right near me and although it was against the law to kill deer, I couldn't resist the temptation, so grabbed my rifle and killed him and I believe it wasn't more than five minutes before this deer had been parcelled out, cut up and divided even though it hadn't been skinned for each man in reach, got in and cut out a hunk of deer meat.