

PLUMLEY, ISAAC

INTERVIEW

4748

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Form A-(S-149)

19

BIOGRAPHY FORM

4748.

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Merrill A. Nelson.

This report made on (date) June 25, 1937. 193

This man was aged, white bearded, slightly deaf, difficult to interview.

1. Name Isaac Plumley.

2. Post Office Address Route #2, Lahoma, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Three miles north and one and a half miles west of Drummond.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 15 Year 1843.

5. Place of birth Beckleyville, County, Seat of Raleigh County, West Virginia.

6. Name of Father Henry Plumley Place of birth Beckleyville, West Virginia.

Other information about father See Story.

7. Name of Mother Nancy Martin. Place of birth Beckleyville, West Virginia.

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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Merrill Nelson,
Interviewer.
June 25, 1937.

STORY OF ISAAC PLUMLEY,
LAHOMA, OKLAHOMA. AGED NINETY-FOUR.

I was born and raised in West Virginia. My father was a boiler maker and could make any kind of a tank. My mother was busy rearing a family of nine children. One of my grandmothers was a German. One of my grandfathers was ninety-eight when he died.

I was in the Civil War for three years. I drove a six mule team. I would rather drive that kind of a team than any other. I recall when West Virginia separated from Virginia. I was in or near a number of battles. One of these was the battle of Piedmont. In this battle, the Federals captured three thousand Confederate prisoners.

The way I came to Kansas was as follows: I came on the C & O Railroad as far as Cincinnati. There was no railroad into Wichita when I came there. I had to stop some distance from that place, I think at a place called Piedmont, and then came into Wichita on a hack.

Some time before the Cherokee Strip opened I was ranging along the Cimarron and the Eagle Chief country as a hunter. There was a trail along the river also known as the Eagle Chief Trail. It was an old Indian trail. Sometimes I hunted by

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myself; usually, however, with a bunch of men. I hunted wild geese, ducks, cranes and all kinds of water animals. You could get great piles of wild turkey and prairie chickens, and quail by the half bushel in the sage brush along the river. Every kind of game including geese and ducks were there in abundance. I shot both deer and antelope many times. A deer will want to fight. One time there was just a creek between a deer and me. He stood there as if he would like to attack me until I loaded my gun and shot him.

An antelope is different. He will seek a high point where he can look around. I have crawled many a time up to within ten feet of them. There I would drop down on my stomach. The antelope would not move until he saw what was there. Just move a finger and he was gone. We used to flag these antelope. You tie a red rag to the top of your gun. The antelope will circle around the flag, not running till he spots you. They will stamp like sheep if they don't see you.

Rich men from the east would come into this country with a pack of greyhounds. They would try to run down these antelope but they never could do it unless the ante-

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lope were crippled. It took more ~~genera~~ship to set the antelope than the deer. An antelope depends on his legs, yet has as good or better sense of smell than a deer.

I have now in my possession an old German double barreled shotgun, which was purchased about the time of the Civil war. It is at least eighty years old. It is inlaid with a design of an animal and has a cloth fuse. A forty-five muzzle loading run will beat any breech loading run I know.

In the fall of the year the buffalo would drift south from the Kansas Country to the Panhandle country. Two men killed three thousand buffalo in one summer and secured a dollar apiece for their hides.

One time I saw an antelope on a point in a big draw. I circled and crept up the big draw till I got close to him. Finally, I got to where I could see his neck and head. I shot him. The others in the herd flew, but were frightened at something else in the west and came back my way and I shot another antelope. I suppose I have killed hundreds of them.

I made the run in a spring wagon into the Cherokee Strip, driving a team. A spring wagon can go pretty fast and

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I kept up pretty well with the rest of them. I tried to get a claim on Salt Fork but failed. So I went to Find. Later I settled a little south of my present place. I put up a part sod, part log, part dugout house on the side of a bank. Most all of the homesteaders lived in sod houses.

The next year I broke up forty acres and put out three hundred locust trees. This was several years before Drummond was founded. Drummond came with a branch railroad. So at first I bought supplies at Find.

There was a cattle thief, who stole three herds of cattle in the Osage country and sniped these cattle to Wichita. He pre-empted the entire townsite of Drummond. His brother was killed in the Glass Mountains for stealing stock.

Another outlaw was "Randy Hill" who had a cave north of Drummond. The outlaws also killed a fellow who lived about a mile east of here who had cattle out in that district west of here as they wanted his cattle. But for the most part the settlers were peaceable.

As I said we lived in sod houses and I had a cooking stove and made a bed and table, being handy with tools. I have built many a house.

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Some of the old towns have disappeared. Among these was Concord, three miles southwest of my home. Rogers or Lillie had a store there and I think they had a postoffice also.

There was a United Brethern church in a school house a few years after the opening. This church was a half mile west of here.

I said I failed to secure a claim. It should be said I was too particular, as I staked a claim but never went back. I leased the southwest quarter of section thirty-three, Township twenty-one, Range eight. I stuck the first plough in the ground that was ever stuck in that quarter. Previously, I ^{had} stayed a short time, not more than a year at Enid. Two of my brothers made the run. I think they received claims. I had had some use a land in Ponca, but still had a homestead claim. However, I never used it.

In the early days I raised corn and hogs. This is difficult to do now. I have raised as much as three thousand bushels of corn in a season. I have taken ten wagon loads of hogs to market at a time. One time I sold seventy head of hogs averaging three hundred and sixty-five pounds. This

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was the talk of the yards for years. This was about the time of the opening of the strip.

After the Civil War, as I said, I owned a farm in Kansas. I came down from Wichita to Harper County from which point I made the run. I was one of the first settlers in the western part of the county in West on West Creek Township. There I used over two mules. No mules I would saw by hand but we threshed with a drover.

Back in West Virginia I used a flail. More recently I have ~~used~~ used a combine. But wheat grew easier and produced a heavier crop than any other cereal there in West Virginia.

In Kansas I was on the township board, the school board and I was a director of the school district there. I held the first two positions for six years. I was treasurer of these boards and handled the money.

I have five children, three boys living and two girls dead. My boys are farmers but the oldest, John, worked in England for John Johnson of Harper. He also bought grain for Hitchcock of Harper there.

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I was mustered out in 1865 at Springfield, Illinois, and the gun I described is the gun I had then.

We used simple fare in those days. One way of fixing Kaffir corn was to make corn bread of it. People would think this terrible now. People were more friendly and neighborly in those days. We had no Indians out here, and for the most part the settlers were reasonable.

There were other men who killed panthers and other wolves out here in an early day. I, myself, hunted around this neighborhood. I must have shot a dozen deer near here. There were wild cats here too. And you could get a wagon load of turkeys if you wanted to.

There was a family in the neighborhood for a while by the name of Kitchen. They lived south of here. They moved to Salt Fork. They had a house (possibly the one buried at Sunnyside Cemetery).