

POSTON, GEORGE LLOYD

INTERVIEW #6441-A

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Interview with George L. Poston  
1157 S. Yorktown, Tulsa.

Field Worker - W. T. Holland  
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When I was fourteen years old my parents moved to Denton, Wise County, Texas; this was in 1876. While you may not be interested in what happened in Texas, still this concerns Oklahoma as Oklahoma Indians were connected with it. Some of the Indians of southern Oklahoma were raiders, and most anything bad you wanted to call them. I am an Indian myself, but we were civilized, or so called, and didn't participate in raids and killings and robbery. The early settlers were exposed to , and suffered greatly from these Indian raids. The Apaches and Comanches were the worst and on every "light moon" or when the moon was about full, was when these raids would take place. The band of Indians, sometimes fifty or more, would make their raids

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and steal horses principally; they didn't bother cattle. They would kill the settlers and capture the girls and young women and take them away with them. I helped fight off just such a raid when I was fourteen years old, in Wise County, Texas, down near Decatur, Texas. They raided a school, burned the building and killed some of the children and kidnapped two girls. I had the satisfaction later, from 1876 to 1880, of chasing these raiding Indians and giving them some of the same treatment they had given the white settlers. I was a Texas Ranger during those four years. We guarded wagon trains across the country but our main territory was on the Mexican border, from Brownsville to El Paso, on the New Mexico line.

In 1874 and 1875 I worked on the King Ranch, in southeast Texas. At that time John Chisholm was a partner of King in the cattle business. He

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was the man for whom the famous Chisholm Trail was named. I helped drive cattle over this trail along about the time it was established. I read some accounts of this trail, which missed its route or location one hundred miles, or more. This trail began at the famous King Ranch in southeast Texas, where Chisholm got his cattle and where he grazed them.

This trail ran northwest from the King Ranch through Texas, passing about fifteen or twenty miles west of Gainesville, Texas, and crossing the Red River at Mud Creek. It passed between Denton and Decatur, Texas. After crossing into Oklahoma it bore to the northwest passing through the Cheyenne and Kiowa reservations and east of the town of Cheyenne. It crossed the North Canadian River at Woodward, thence north to Dodge City, Kansas. There were very few white men and rarely ever a white settlement or town on the trail. Grass in abundance grew on it. We

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would drive from three to five thousand head of cattle. Sometimes we would start early with three year old steers and graze them slowly north and maybe not get to Dodge City before September. Sometimes we would have a herd of stock or mixed cattle, these we drove through faster, as we wanted to get them in Kansas and northern Oklahoma in time to sell them to grazers. We handled a lot of cattle then as the King Ranch was crowded and Chisholm wanted to get them thinned out. I worked for Chisholm later. I was trail inspector for one and one-half years. My duty was to inspect all herds that passed over the trail. The cattle had two brands, the owners and the road brand. The road brand was just one letter, so I rode from herd to herd and went through them, looking for off brands and when one was found, I returned it to its rightful owner, or had it returned.

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Once in a while a man would object to the inspection, but I never failed to inspect and usually found a lot of off brands in such herds. Chisholm usually had from twenty to twenty-five cow-hands on his drives and like I said, when driving steers, we just stayed out until they fattened before driving them into Dodge City. We had our chuck wagons and slept out all the time, taking time about to guard the cattle at night.

We weren't bothered by Indians. They were on their reservations and they remained on them pretty well, as far as Oklahoma was concerned. They raided north Texas for a long time. I know, as I fought them off and on from 1871 to 1880.

Some of us rangers witnessed a war dance of the Pueblo Indians, that was hair raising. They scalped the whites during those years, for we saw the Indians waving these fresh scalps around when

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doing this war dance. We couldn't or didn't molest them on their reservations, but went after them when they were caught off on a raid. I had some harrowing experiences. I would hardly believe them if I hadn't gone through them myself and witnessed some of the butchery of the savages. These Indians would kill the white man's horse first, then they had him at their mercy. Indians would fight indefinitely out in the open prairie but if the white man got to the hills or in a ravine, they usually gave up the chase.