

RUTLEDGE, ACE.

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Zaidee B. Bland,
Journalist,
March 23, 1938.

Interview With Ace Rutledge,
Altus, Oklahoma.

I do not know in what state my father, R. L. Rutledge, was born but my mother, Sarah Mabourn, was born in Illinois and I was born in Red River County, Texas, August 2, 1881.

When I moved to Indian Territory to stay we had leased land from an Indian and moved all our household goods in two wagons. We made the trip from Fannin County, Texas, in two days and nights. The night we camped out it rained all night and we spent a very miserable time trying to keep dry and warm for it was raining so hard that we could not have a fire. The next morning the creek was so high that we had to wait until nearly noon before we could cross for there were no bridges and the stream had to be forded.

We had a ten year lease on a tract of Indian land. we had to put up a log house and do fencing around all the land we put in cultivation. We put fifty acres in that first year. We built a two room log house with a rock fireplace

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in one end on which we cooked and kept warm in the winter. We covered this house with clapboards and had a plank floor in the two main rooms.

Our water was furnished from a spring about 130 yards from the house. The fifty acres and all the out buildings and house were enclosed in a rail fence. We brought our hogs with us and bought a cow from the Indian for \$10.00.

Anything in the world would grow if the seed was put in the ground so everything we ever heard of good to eat was planted. We made our own syrup and took corn and wheat to mill for our flour and meal. There was no lack of things to eat but not much money.

WILDLIFE AND BIRDS.

The wolf and deer were the only large animals that were numerous. We hunted the wolf for sport and had deer meat to eat whenever we wanted it. Coons, opossums, squirrels and rabbits were to be had every day if we wanted them for our dog that we had brought with us. We hunted every day and we could shoot squirrel from out our

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front door any time we wanted one to eat. Prairie chicken, quail and wild turkeys, while not so numerous in the woods, could be had by hunting them on the more open lands.

We hunted coons at night. Bouncer, our dog, would tree them and we would shine their eyes and shoot them out of the tree. I have shot five coons out of one tree a lot of times. We thought coon meat better than opossum for a possum will eat dead carcasses of animals and a coon will not. A coon must have clean fresh food at all times.

INDIANS.

We did not have much to do with the Indians but there was one old Indian who took quite a fancy to our family and stayed a good deal with us. She was a kind of medicine woman and was always murmuring over us if any one got hurt or sick. The best we could count she lived to be about one hundred and eight years old. Her name was Keiffer.

WILD FOOD.

In the Spring there were a dozen different plants used for food but I never learned the names of them. In Summer we had every kind of berry I ever heard of ripening right

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at our door. Grapes and plums also ripened in Summer and in the Fall there were haws, several kind, persimmons and nuts.

Our store house was always full of things to eat that nature gave for the harvesting. we would take our dinner and stay all day gathering fruit or nuts in the woods.

Fishing was good everywhere there was water. I have caught lots of fish out of Washita River that thrown over my shoulder and head held up so you could see it from the front the tail would drag the ground and I am over six feet tall in my stocking feet.

LAW AND ORDER....SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES.

A man's gun was his law and we never bothered about school and churches. There were a few houses built and used for school and church but we never bothered to attend either. We went to dances when we wanted to be with our sweethearts or box suppers sometimes.