

SANDERS, LILLIE.

INTERVIEW

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INDIAN-RELIEF PROJECT
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Relief Project for Oklahoma

SANDERS, LILLIE (MRS.) - INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker's Name Ophelia D. Vestal

Date of interview (date) January 3, 1938

1. Name Mrs. Lillie Sanders

2. Home Office Address Lawton, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Route 2.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 13 Year 1880

5. Place of birth Wilson County, Texas:

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

Note: For complete narrative by the field worker deal with the life and work of the person interviewed. Report material for selected subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 3.

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Vestal, Ophelia D. - Investigator.
Indian Pioneer History.
January 3, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. Lillie Sanders.

Many years ago in La Salle County, Texas, near San Antonio, lived a family of the name of Stringfield. The father's and mother's names were Tom and Sarah. In this family there were one girl and two boys.

As the country was very thinly settled it was several miles to their neighbors' homes. Once the Stringfield family decided to spend a few days with their friends some thirty miles away. They hitched the ox team to the wagon and visited their friends; on the way back they were near a Mexican camp, when a band of Indian men surrounded them, killing the father, mother and a little boy. These Indians thought the little nine year old girl named Ida was dead, but she was not, so they left, taking with them the little boy about five years old named Tommy.

When the Indians attacked these white people it was a big surprise, although the white people had in their possession a shotgun to protect themselves. The Indians used poisoned bows and arrows. Years ago the Indians would hunt the most poisonous snakes and stick their arrows in the

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poison, then when they hit anything with this arrow it was most sure to kill. Several shots were fired, but the father's arm was broken, then their lives were taken.

Some Mexicans soon arrived at the scene taking the dead bodies and the little girl to their camp, caring for her and burying the others. Their graves were dug with butcher knives.

Years passed, the little girl longed for her brother that she tried to save with herself from being taken by the Indians. At last she gave up all hopes of ever hearing from her brother.

Tommy was very small but he remembered his family, though he soon learned the Indians' ways and beliefs, in going from Oklahoma, Texas, Mexico and Arizona on big raids made by the Indians. His name Tommy was dropped. His hair grew long and he was taught to braid it as all Indians did, then he was known as "Two Braids".

Two Braids was held captive with the band of Apaches at Fort Sill. He, being a white boy who grew up with the Indians, was pushed ahead to talk to the white people, or do any work if it should concern any white people.

Before Chief Geronimo died he called Two Braids to

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his bedside and, as white people were called "pale face" by the Indians, he said: "You are 'pale face' and you were captured in south Texas."

A few years passed and the Apaches were given their freedom. Two Braids now wandered about always wishing he could find his relatives. He started working with a show traveling southward.

Near the vicinity of San Antonio during his performance, Two Braids was giving a little history of his life and said: "Some of you older persons might remember about forty years ago, a massacre. I am the only survivor of that family and I was captured by the Indians. I do not know my people, not even my name, but if any of you remember this massacre please tell me." A real old man came to Tommy Stringfield, told him he remembered the massacre of the Stringfield family and was among the white men who hunted southward from San Antonio in search for little Tommy. This man also told Two Braids or Tommy where his sister lived. Tommy Stringfield took his wife and son and found his sister Ida who had married and was quite old. Of course this was a happy meeting but they were not quite sure that they were brother and sister.

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This case was taken to Court. The sister was in one room and the brother Tommy in another room. Questions were asked about the childhood days. They must have been related because they both told things that happened just alike, how they used to pick berries together, the color of the little girl's apron, their neighbors they had visited, and by both telling the same stories they believed that they were brother and sister.

Tommy Stringfield married a part Indian, had a son, but because of being reared by the Indians, always seemed to have a roaming disposition and never stayed in any place but a short time.