

SELF, ALFRED DUDLEY

INTERVIEWS

#7580

329.

PROPERTY ROOM  
WORKS PROCESS DELEGATION  
In the Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Hazel B. Greene

Report made on (date) September 18, 1937

Name Alfred Dudley Self

Post Office Address Sheriff's office, Hugo, Oklahoma

Residence address (or location) Hugo, Oklahoma

DATE OF BIRTH: Month May 4, Day 4 Year 1892.

Place of birth Selfs, Texas, nine miles north of Honey Grove, Texas

Name of Father Tom Self Place of birth Selfs, Texas

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Mother Jennie Broadfoot Self Place of birth Selfs, Texas

Other information about mother Both parents died and were buried at  
Selfs, Texas

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  
pages attached \_\_\_\_\_

My parents moved to Jackson County, Indian Territory, near the village of Jackson, in the fall of 1897. They settled on Crowder Prairie just about six miles from Jackson, which was our post office where we got our infrequent mail. We came in covered wagons, of course, and brought every thing we had from Sells, a little village about nine miles north of Honey Grove, Texas, which was named for the large amount of honey found in a grove on that site by the first settlers there. Sells, of course, was named for the Self family, whose members were legion.

We were the first white family to settle on Crowder Prairie. There was no school there for the first few years we were there, and I went back to Sells and attended Hammett College there. They taught everything in that college from the first grade on up, and through college courses in just anything one wanted to major in; mechanics, electricity, telegraphy, law, and medicine. The college was supported by donations

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from prosperous citizens, and "Professor Hammett" managed it; but after five or six years of his managing some of the supporters got tired of the way he managed it. They had a "bust up", and the college was discontinued. Then we got a school about four miles from where we lived, and I walked that four miles to school for about four terms. My two brothers, Henry and Roy, and my four sisters went to Crowder Prairie School, as it was called. Crowder Prairie is about six miles long and is the biggest prairie in Choctaw County.

We lived at the south end of it. We came to the Indian Territory to "grow up with the country" and we did just that.

My father farmed and after we grew old enough to work he set aside four or five acres for each of us and permitted us to plant it in whatever we wished, cotton or corn, and whatever it yielded was ours. Sometimes we would make as high as a bale and a quarter of cotton to the acre, always as much as three fourth of a bale, and usually a bale to the acre. We worked all over the farm,

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and of course Father did too, but all that was raised on our patches was ours. We had our ponies and saddles, too, which we bought and paid for, and raised a little corn to feed them, though they required very little feed because the range was fine and they could usually get by without feed, except in the coldest part of the Winter. They were just little Choctaw ponies. They were like the cattle here, cold blooded, not highly bred, and would never grow very large. The Indians never fed their stock unless the grass was entirely gone. We each had our catching rope and learned to use it. We would be roping the calves and riding them just as soon as they were big enough. We spent Sundays riding and roping calves going up one branch and down another fighting wasps and bumble bees, and swimming in summer. Why on earth the folks objected to us boys going in the creek is something I still don't understand. We had a lot of fun and the only thing that hurt us was the whipping that we always

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got for having gone in the creek. And they would always know it no matter how long we laid out to get our hair thoroughly dry.

Speaking of bumble bees, I remember once they found a nest of them and told me that they could stir them up and for me to hold a jug and if they saw the jug they would everyone go right in it. They never saw the jug but they stung me good and proper.

In Winter, after the crops were gathered we went to school week days, and Saturdays, after enough wood was cut to cook with until the following Saturday, we could go hunting down on the branches and creeks; but we generally did that at night. Coon, opossum and an occasional skunk. We got from five to fifteen cents for the hides, if a skunk hide was especially nice we got a quarter for it. Produce could not be sold at all. We just had to eat all the eggs, chickens, etc., which we produced on the farm. We raised lots of good things to eat too.

There was a gin at Mayhew, about eight miles north of us, and one at Lake West, where we would get our cotton

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ginned. Then we would take it to Honey Grove to market and buy flour, coffee and sugar, and a few clothes, especially shoes. We went barefooted until it was so cold we couldn't and then bought those old rawhide buckle shoes, which never wore out. We'd just outgrow them. I remember an old man who carried the mail from old Bennington to Jackson. I never saw him with a shoe on. He must have gone barefooted winter and summer. His name was Max Lee. It was about eight miles from old Bennington to Jackson, and he made the trip three times a week. I think the mail came from Caddo to Bennington.

It was a good day's drive from our place to Selfs, Texas, where we would go and spend the night, and go on to Honey Grove next day to sell our cotton and make our purchases, then back to Selfs to spend that night and home next day. Three days it nearly always took us. We lived on Crowder Prairie eleven years and farmed and raised stock. T. S. was our brand and some times we would drive three or four hundred head of steers

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to Money Grove to ship from there. We raised and shipped lots of hogs after the railroad came through Boswell. We raised so much corn and bought a good deal, then bought hogs, fed them and tried to get out a car load each month. If you never tried to pen a hog you can have no idea of how difficult it is. It always watches you and backs away from you. It is awfully hard to snow a hog the gate because of that, but if you don't rush him, he will finally find it. If you rush him he gets frightened, and will run over you, or between your legs. Once a great big old hog attempted to run between my legs and I caught him by each flank and rode him all over the lot before he dislodged me. He didn't hurt me but I was so excited I cried, and I was a great big boy, too.

We boys were permitted to have our own hogs and cows and calves. We used to help Mother break wild cows to be milked. One of us would guard her in a corner of a fence while Mother did the milking. We



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guarded with a pitchfork, and we didn't have to prod them many times either until they were afraid not to stand and be milked. At first we roped off the calves, until we learned that by knocking them under the chin they would stand off until we were through milking. And one time I had the calf rope tied around my waist, and after that big old calf dragged me all over that cow lot I was willing to just hold the end of the rope.

Wild steers would fight a man on horseback if they got mad, and you would crowd them. The cattle raised on the range were not of much account. They were too small, but sometimes one grew to be big. We used to buy steers from William LeFlore, a Choctaw Indian; \$25.00 was his standard price for a steer no matter how young or old he was. Once when we bought fifty head of steers from him <sup>and</sup> we were in the lot cutting out the ones we wanted, (he would give one their choice at \$25.00 each) one big old eight year old steer, with horns so wide he could not have gone in at an ordinary door, caught my father's eye.

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Mr. LeFlore said he didn't want to sell that one. He had sold him again and again and he always got away from the drivers and came back and it was understood that a buyer never was to return to LeFlore's range after cattle that got away and came back. That was our loss. But father took a chance on this eight year old fellow and got him away, too, but we really had trouble as we went through Boswell. He ran into Duncan's Dry Goods Store and came out with bolts of cloth hung on those immense horns. That was a squally time, but we got him to Paris, Texas, and shipped him away.

We had some pretty good times. When we first came over here we were afraid to get out after dark. We went in and breathlessly waited for something to happen; we didn't know what. But it never happened. We got brave then and even went to one of the Choctaw Indians' snake dance. I guess it must have been what we would call a picnic because they cleaned off a ball diamond upon which to play Indian ball and cleared and

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made a race track for their horse races, they rode the horses 'slick', just a halter, and the riders wore only something like the bathing trunks of today and a feather head dress.

I was little, that was about 1898, but I remember seeing the races and the Indian ball game, and then along about sundown the snake dance. I believe that men and boys only participated. I don't recall any women and girls in it, but maybe I just couldn't tell because they had on blankets, lots of beads, feather head-dress, necklaces, anklets and bracelets of animal claws and teeth. They danced around a big log heap as they chanted to the beating of the drum, which was a home-made affair, and entirely un-musical. As they warmed up to the dance blankets were thrown aside, and they danced mostly in their beads, necklaces, and sort of breach clouts. But I don't believe there were any women or girls in that dance. That was held at Frazier, the oldest Indian settlement in the whole country. It was not a church ground though. It was in the summer time and they really got hot dancing around that log heap.

There were churches at Good Springs and Pigeon Roost. The Choctaws would gather at those places and camp for a week or two or three at a time. There were fifteen or twenty camp houses at each place, but mostly they were used only when it rained and to keep food away from the dogs because the meetings were usually held in the summer and they slept out. They preached in Choctaw and had an interpreter for the benefit of the white folks.

We got right friendly with some of them and when we would take cotton to market they would sometimes go to Honey Grove with us. There were saloons over there, and sometimes we would have to delay our journey home in order to get an Indian friend out of jail who had

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gotten too much firewater. One old fellow got drunk over there once and friends shut him up in a meat storage house belonging to merchants there to keep him from getting in jail.

There were a few white families at Jackson about six miles from us. Jackson consisted <sup>of</sup> two stores, a school

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church, blacksmith shop, a well right in the middle of the street, and a trough for the watering of horses. It is a ghost town now.

Dr. Billis was our first doctor at Crowder Springs. He lives at Soper now. Then other doctors came on.

In winter we went to dances and parties. I have ridden fourteen miles to a party, danced all night, and got home just in time to go to work and work all day.

I went to Maynew to see how the Indian court was conducted and saw some men whipped. The women had to work, they had no time to get into devilment. No were never whipped. I wanted to see one executed by shooting, but ~~father would not let me.~~ He was afraid it would make an unpleasant, lasting memory, and I guess it would have.

A lot of the full-blood Indians I knew killed squirrels with a club made for that purpose. They were so adept at it that they could throw that club

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into the highest trees and knock a squirrel out as quickly as if he had been shot. Many of them used the bows and arrows, especially for fishing. One old Indian I know now still uses a bow and arrow for hunting and killing game. His name is Buck Bench, and he lives a mile and one half east and two miles north of Boswell. He was the best player in Indian ball that I ever saw. He was as fleet of foot as a race horse. Any time he got that ball he made a score.

After we moved to Boswell and a trail killed my grandmother Christmas day 1.10, my parents returned to Selfs, Texas, where both died and are buried there.