

HOLDER, R. B.

INTERVIEW

#8997

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Italian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma
HOLDER R. B. INTERVIEW 8997

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Field Worker's name John F. Dougherty

This report made on (date) October 26 1937

1. Name R. B. Holder

2. Post Office Address Mill Creek, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Route 1

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 15 Year 1869

5. Place of birth Texas

6. Name of Father John P. Holder Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother Elizabeth Shields Place of birth Sherman, Texas

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 _____.

John F. Dougherty
Investigator
October 26, 1937

Interview with
R. B. Holder
Mill Creek, Oklahoma.

My parents were John P. Holder, born in Missouri, and Elizabeth Shields Holder, born in Sherman, Texas.

Father was a farmer. There were two children in our family. I was born in Texas, August 15, 1869.

I first came to the Territory in 1885, when Brother and I brought five hundred head of hogs to "mast feed" through the Winter. We forded Red River and stopped on Mudd Creek, west of Ardmore in the Chickasaw Nation. We had a chuck wagon and tent and camped through the Winter, herding the hogs so they would not stray too far.

In February we began butchering the hogs and in March we freighted all the meat to Texas and sold it.

In 1888, I returned to Ardmore to see an uncle.

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He persuaded me to help him put in a ranch. We put in the Gillespie Ranch on Blue River that year. I later handled a ranch for Bill Perry, on Pennington. It consisted of twelve sections.

If anybody rode up and wanted something to eat, we fed him and he was welcome to stay as long as he wished, but we asked him no questions and we answered none.

In those days all horses were barefooted. If we discovered a horse's track which showed that the horse was shod we knew a United States Marshal was in the neighborhood. The word was spread abroad so that those for whom the marshal was looking could hide or run away.

My uncle traded a gilt for three lots in Ardmore. Property was not worth much in those days.

The brand of each ranchman was registered in Kansas City and St. Louis and when a stray beef was shipped, the owner received the money for it. One day when I was loading some cattle I accidentally

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loaded a neighbor ranchman's steer. He missed the steer and I told him that I had shipped him. Then he prosecuted me. But he received his money from Kansas City and that freed me.

I went to the Choctaw Nation after a bunch of cattle and I noticed signs printed with black paint on boards nailed to trees along the M. K. & T. right-of-way on the west side of the railroad, which said, "Mr. United States Deputy Marshal, this is the dead line. When you cross this line you take your life in your own hands." These signs were placed here by outlaws and desperados to keep the United States Marshals from invading their territory, but the marshals paid no attention to these warnings.

About the only recreation the cowboys had was to go to a dance hall at Sulphur which we called "The Seven Sisters." This was a dance hall built over the old gum springs at Sulphur. We would work all day, come in and eat supper, get a fresh horse and ride over to "The Seven Sisters." It was a

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gathering place for cowboys from all directions.

We danced with our boots, spurs and "chaps" on.

We danced the square dance. That was the only

kind of dance which the cowboys knew. There were

always plenty of girls to dance with us.

I am a bachelor and I live with my brother
and his family near Mill Creek.