

PRICE, WILLIAM STEWART

INTERVIEW

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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Boatman, Robert H.

This report made on (date) June 22 1937

1. Name William Stewart Price

2. Post Office Address Blanchard, R#2

3. Residence address (or location) Nine miles southeast of Blanchard

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 3 Year 1861

5. Place of birth Texas

6. Name of Father John Price Place of birth Ohio

Other information about father No information

7. Name of Mother Mollissie Pallet Place of birth Missouri

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

Robert H. Boatman  
Interviewer  
June 22, 1937

Interview with William Stewart Price  
Route 2, Blanchard, Oklahoma  
Born July 3, 1861.

I came to Indian Territory with my father John Price during the Civil War.

At that time there was nothing here but a big open country filled with cattle, deer, turkey and all kinds of wild game. There were also lots of wild horses and if you wanted one all you had to do was just to pick out the one you liked, run him down and rope him and you had a battle then as he would fight to kill.

We were on the Washita River some where about where Paula Valley now is.

That was all a big ranch. Pauls Valley was not even thought of then. There was one little store, across on the east side of the river. It belonged to old Doc Warner. He had a big ranch also; the goods were hauled by wagon and team from Gainesville, Texas, or from Fort Smith, Arkansas.

About all the way people knew what directions were was just to start out for a certain point. We would go to Gainesville across the Limestone Gap in the Arbuckle Mountains. About all that a grocery store had in stock was flour, sugar, coffee, salt and sometimes soda and if we wanted corn meal we would shell up some two to four bushels of corn and take it on horseback to a mill some twelve to fifteen miles down the river and

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there we would have it ground into meal.

The mill was an old treadwheel mill run by ox power.

The ox would walk on a big round wheel and its walking would turn the wheel beneath its feet and the wheel was on a shaft that ran the mill.

There was nothing here until the Santa Fe railroad came in 1880 and that was about the beginning of the first growth for Oklahoma. This railroad was being built both ways from the North and from the South. The North crew beat the South crew by four days. They met at Furcell or where Furcell now is. It was not there then and neither was Noble or Norman. There was a big ranch right where Furcell is now and all there was at Oklahoma City was a depot and so we ran along with a few settlers coming along as the railroad came.

On Sundays I would saddle up a pony, put my wife and baby on the saddle and get on behind and we would spend the day hunting for pastime. At one time a bunch of turkeys began passing along and it took them over a half a day to get by. The Indians said they were immigrating. There were four to five thousand turkeys in the flock.

On April 2, 1889, the run was made. People were just waiting and at a given time a cannon was fired and away we went. Every way you would look you would see a red flag. Some people

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would fall out and give up the run and some would get ahead and stake a claim.

We kept whipping along. I ran to Crutchen Creek and there were only eighteen men left so then I turned North and I gave that horse all he had so finally I got to where the smoke had kind of cleared away and I staked down three claims and I got in such a hurry I got two flags on the same claim. You know we were to have one hundred and sixty acres. I got two claims instead of three. I gave my father-in-law one of them and then decided I did not want the other one and I gave it away. My father-in-law sold his for one hundred dollars and that claim I staked was right where the very heart of the Oklahoma City oil field is now located.

There were no schools then and no churches. After people began to get settled, they began to have some subscription schools. The parents would pay one dollar and twenty-five cents for each child to go to school. We did not know whether a man or a woman was a school teacher or not. Some one would come along and say he or she was a school teacher and would go around through the settlement and sign up the children and then we would have school from three to four months of a year.

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Most all the teachers came from Texas and the country settled up very fast. People began soon to build houses, break land and farming towns were built. Bridges were built and it looked as tho people would all get rich over night.

It was one continued thing after the other, and today I think that this place that was once what you might call a "No Man's Land" ranks second to none in the United States.