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SNIDER, WOODY W.

INTERVIEW 9750

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Zeides B. Bland

This report made on (date) January 21 1938

1. Name Woody W. Snider.

2. Post Office Address Blair, Oklahoma, Route 2.

3. Residence address (or location) 2 1/2 miles north of Warren, Oklahoma

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 8. Year 1888

5. Place of birth Pope County, Arkansas.

6. Name of Father George M. Snider Place of birth Arkansas.

Other information about father Self-educated man.

7. Name of Mother Ola Rogers. Place of birth Georgia

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 11.

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Zaidee B. Bland,  
Journalist.  
January 21, 1938.

Interview with Woody W. Snider  
Blair, Oklahoma.  
Born January 8, 1888  
Father-George M. Snider.  
Mother-Ola Rogers.

I was almost too small to know what it was all about when Papa came home and told us he was moving to Indian Territory where an uncle lived. I had never seen a train in my life. We were all gotten ready and driven to town by some neighbor and boarded a train. It was a novel experience for me and one full of awe. When the train stopped at Canadian we got off and there was Uncle Bob to meet us. He had a big wagon to which were hitched two horses. We were driven seven miles into the country to his home.

His home consisted of a double log house with a porch built all across the front and a lean-to all across the back, the lean-to making the kitchen and store-room or pantry. There was a big fireplace in the main room. There were plenty of big trees in the yard, for this was a timbered country.

The water supply was from a spring and there was an abundance. When we arrived it was in the winter. It was cold

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and my what things we did have to eat. Cooking was done with a skillet and lid on the fireplace. We did not have flour bread, pie or cakes except on Sunday but my the bread was good. Corn dodger and hoe cakes. We also had sweet potatoes baked in the ashes or in the skillet with the lid on, home-made sorghum with ginger snaps made fresh every day.

The smoke-house was full of meat, lard, cured hams and sausage, as well as the fresh back bones and spare-ribs of the latter kill. There were a lot of milk cows and milk and butter were in abundance. We also had hickory nuts and walnuts to be eaten around the fire every night. In the day time we hunted persimmons, black haws and red haws; I thought..... we had arrived at the land of promise.

We only stayed here a few weeks, possibly through the holidays, when Papa came in one day and said he had leased some land from an Indian and as soon as a house could be run up we were moving into a home of our own. When we moved to this home it was in the little town of Enterprise in Haskell County. There was a sawmill near this town and our house was a boxed three-room affair made from the rough lumber bought at this sawmill. We lived here many years. Papa was distressed about there not being a school, so when fall of

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the year came and he found that he had made an abundant crop he traded corn for lumber at this little sawmill. He bought the lumber that way and put up a one-room school house and opened a subscription school. He charged five cents a day for each pupil who came. You were supposed to pay at the end of each month and the days you were absent were counted off. You would be surprised how few absences there were.

It was a privilege to go to school in those days and every one wanted to go. My first school days were in this school building. There had to be a well dug for water. The water was abundant and soft and in the well hung two immense wooden buckets-one on each end of the rope. It was lots of fun to draw the water from the well. This school building was 24x30 feet and was heated by a big box stove that sat in the middle of the house and burned wood. Each patron of the school would donate a load of wood, but the big boys or Papa had to cut it into stove lengths. This little school building was set right out in the woods and there were no paths through the woods from the children's homes to the school house for the children to walk in. Some of the children had to come five miles. Some of the men cut an immense log, hitched a yoke of oxen to this log and beginning at each of

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the houses they drug out a path to the school house so the children would not get lost.

I remember one had snowstorm. When the children who lived the farthest away got to school their feet were so cold that Papa had them to pull off their shoes and put their feet into a pan of cold water before he would let them come to the fire, to prevent frost bite. If the weather was too cold after the children got to school Papa would keep them at the school-house, not letting them go home for several days. Everyone had a dinner pail. No one thought of going home after once getting to school. We took up at eight in the morning and stayed until five in the evening unless it got too dark, but this was <sup>a</sup>suntime. We had thirty minute recess both morning and afterneon, instead of fifteen minutes as the children do now.

The boys all played base ball and we went to the woods and cut down a sapling and made a bat and lots of times we used a home-made ball. A bought ball was a luxury. The girls played Ante and Over, Blackman, Base and Jump the Rope. Papa always stayed out on the school grounds with us but did not

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enter our games much. He was the best teacher I ever knew. He only had to look across the room at a youngster who was misbehaving to have him quiet down. He was commanding in appearance.

"Books" was called by the ringing of a little brass bell. This bell was rung by hand. Every Friday evening a spelling match was held and the public was always invited and could partake of the spelling if they so desired. We used Ray's Arithmetic, McGuffey's Readers and Reeds and Kellogs Grammar. We all used slates and pencils and Papa set a copy on the board for us to all learn to write by or. sometimes he would write a copy on each slate for us to copy. We had corn bread in our dinner pail, also meat and ginger snaps and nuts.

The woods were full of squirrels, opossums, coons and quail. There was always plenty of home cured meat at home, also. Huckleberries were plentiful in the spring and summer in the woods and mother always dried a lot and there was often huckleberry pie. Opossums always fattened on haws and persimmons and their meat was very sweet and fine and we ate a lot of them.

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There were no doctors in the country; everyone did their own doctoring with home remedies. I do not think they had diseases as we do now. We were all a healthy bunch.

Mother made the home remedies from barks and herbs that grew in the woods and in the garden. I remember there was always a bottle of cough syrup made from the tea of Jerusalem Bark and sweetened with honey. We never minded taking it for it had a good flavor. Peach tree poultices made from boiling peach tree leaves and thickening with meal, were used for swellings of all kinds and sprains.

We were never taught fear of any kind. We were taught never under any circumstances to disturb a bird's nest. The tree never grew too high or the limb too small for me to climb out on to look into a bird's nest to see the little birds or to count the eggs and see the color of the eggs.

There were quite a few poisonous snakes and we killed a good many but were never bitten by one.

We lived by Taylor Mountain once. This mountain broke off abruptly and the Canadian River ran under this high bluff. It seemed to me that this bluff was <sup>a</sup> quarter of a mile high.



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About half way up the bluff, there was a crag stuck out where the eagles always built a nest.

I was very much interested in this nest and when the river was low would often go and gaze up at it, wishing that I might see into it. I conceived of the plan to climb the mountain and crawl out onto the point and look down into the nest perhaps that way I might get to see the eggs or little eaglets. Accordingly, I climbed the mountain; after I had gotten to the top of the mountain I had to get down on my hands and knees and crawl out onto the point and stretch my neck and head out over the chasm to see down at all. I never realized the danger until I had my head out over the rock and saw how far down it was to the lower rock and nothing to hold to if I started sliding. I felt really shaky and never tried a trick like that again. When I got home I told my mother about it. I told her she need not bother to make me promise I would never do such a foolish trick again, for I had no intention of repeating such <sup>a</sup> performance.

Neighbors would collect together and we would go out to Sans Bois Creek, seining, and stay two or three days at a time.

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Mother and the other women would take along their skillet and lids and bread was baked right on the banks of the creek while the fish were frying.

Every boy in those days hunted and had a hound dog. I never had a dog but I always wanted one. There was a man who lived only about one mile from us who had a big raw-boned hound dog that he called Red. This dog could be depended on to never, never chase a rabbit. All of us boys wanted this dog. As the years went by this man decided to move away and did not want to take this hound dog with him so offered him for sale for \$5.00 to any one. I don't think I had ever seen five dollars at one time in my life. There was not much money in the country. I heard my uncle say he borrowed \$25.00 once to make a crop on and I thought it was a fortune. Mother had a pet pig that had been raised around the home. I got some corn and tolled that pig the whole mile to the neighbor's house and asked the man if he would take the pig for the hound dog. We made a trade right there. I took my hound dog home to Mother and I had to confess to Mother, for the whole transaction had been carried on unbeknownst to my mother who owned the pig.

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I would not ask her before I took the pig for fear she would say, "No", and I knew if she once said "No" I would not dare disobey her, but I really did want that hound dog. I think she really knew how very much I wanted that dog for she did not scold me much. It is natural for a hound dog to hunt and if you do not go with him he will go alone. I have heard my hound dog bay a lot of times and know by his bark that he had treed something and go several miles to see what it was and relieve him, for he would always have something treed when he barked.

My grandfather was a doctor back in Arkansas and he always said, "Remember son, every hant in the world has a reasonable explanation for its appearance." I have made it my business all my life to run down "Haint Stories" and always found them out. Once Grandfather was away from home and had to go through a dark woods past an old graveyard that was supposed to be haunted to get home. As he neared the graveyard he began to think about it. Sure enough, away back under the trees it looked like two women with long billowing white robes out walking among the trees. Grandfather got down and tied his horse at the gate and went in to investigate.

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It was two old sheep grazing on the grass among the stones.

There was a church house supposed to be haunted, so as Grandfather was passing it one night after midnight on the way to see a patient he remembered to look and, sure enough,

it looked like a woman dressed in white waving her arms walking to and fro across the rostrum inside of the church.

Grandfather reined his horse around to the side of the church and watched through the window until he knew what it was. A cottonwood tree had been allowed to grow up right against the house and was about ten feet high. On moonlight nights when the wind blew and the tree waved it made the shadow go back and forth in front of the stage.

There were rail fences everywhere and there were a great many weird tales told about these corners. Once when Grandfather was riding along he heard a terrible sound coming from the corner of the fence quite a bit ahead of him. His horse heard it, too, and refused to go on toward the noise. He got down and, tying the horse, he went on a foot. He found a negro had taken several rails and laid them across from one side of the fence to the other to make a kind of a platform and laid down on this bunch of rails and gone to sleep and was snoring.

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Screech owls could always scare me at night, even when I knew all the time what they were. They had a way of flying ~~right along by your side from one tree to another as you walk-~~ ed and they had such an eerie cry your blood would run cold in spite of yourself and your hair would stand up on the top of your head.