

STROUD, NEWT. R.

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

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Field Worker's name Virgil Coursey

This report made on (date) June 21, 1937

1. Name Newton R. Stroud (Newt R.)

2. Post Office Address 520 North Spurgeon

3. Residence address (or location) Altus, Oklahoma

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day Year 1870

5. Place of birth

6. Name of Father J. Stroud Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father

7. Name of Mother Emma Kallum Place of birth Tennessee

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

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Virgil Coursey
Interviewer
June 21, 1937.

Interview with Newt R. Stroud
520 North Spurgeon
Altus, Oklahoma

I came to Oklahoma from Tarrant County, Texas, landing here August 21, 1888. My father and the family came in 1889 and settled eight miles east and one mile south of Altus, and took up eight sections of land under the Texas law.

In December 1899, I began to work for the C. I. Herring Ranch, known as the Chain C Ranch (^{92c}), and I worked for this ranch for twelve years.

When I first came here there were very few houses from Doan, Texas, to Mangum, Oklahoma. It was a vast ranching country, and there were also thousands of antelope here.

In 1901 the southern parts of what was known as the Kiowa and Comanche Reservations were leased and fenced into pastures by Colonel Suggs. Tom Burnett was west of Colonel Suggs and the Tom Burnett ranch was known as the 6666 Ranch. Next was Tom Waggoner's Ranch or the D D D (D D) Ranch. Then came the Herring and Stinson Ranch

known as the Chain C Ranch. The Sam Houston Ranch lay north of the Herring and Stinson Ranch.

In February, 1901, Government soldiers and scouts cut the entire outside line fences down and burned the grass and tried to move the cowmen on out, but the cattlemen carried their claim to Washington and this land was held under lease until 1896.

In June, 1901, we had what is known as the largest flood waters ever known in western Oklahoma, according to the Kiowa and Comanche tribes and old cowmen.

On the Herring Ranch there were from forty thousand to fifty-five thousand head of cattle. In 1903 C. I. Herring moved thirty eight thousand into what was known as No Man's Land, now Harper County, and these steers remained there until the country was settled by farmers.

At the present time there are nine men living who worked for C. I. Herring - probably the largest number from any one ranch still living. They are as follows: Nit and Mark Terry of Rosston, Texas; Arthur Burchard, Taylor, Texas; Wash Shelton, Brownsfield, Texas;

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Bill Barnett, Texas; Jim Kelley, Oklahoma City; Warren Howard, Joe McCestill and Newt R. Stroud of Altus, Oklahoma.

Cowmen of the Indian Territory and west Texas met once a year in Fort Worth, Texas, as a brand association and set a date for spring work to start. This date was usually between April 10 and 15. The north and west ranches in and around Seymour, Texas would be represented by one or two men who would work north, getting through between May 15 and May 20.

Then each ranch usually started branding spring calves. During this season we would round up our cattle, cut the cows and calves and when we had gotten from three to five hundred calves we would begin branding.

The herd was held on some creek or near water, and the branding was done openly on the prairie by using four men to bull-dog calves, two men running branding irons and one or two men to rope calves and bring them to the branding iron.

The boys who did the roping could rope from forty to sixty calves in an hour. The beef shipment began

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about July 1. Each ranch had a man to represent it in the general work. On or about July 15 the cattle would be started on the trail. They were usually shipped from Vernon and Electra, Texas. The northern ranches shipped from Woodward quite a lot. Each trail crew consisted of eight men, forty-two head of horses, a cook and chuck wagon. The time spent on the trail counting from the time of leaving the ranch was usually about thirty days.

We seldom ever had any stampedes as we handled beef cattle very carefully and we tried to put more flesh on them during the drive. On an average we traveled about six miles a day. The usual drive consisted of from thirty-five hundred to four thousand steers weighing from a thousand to eleven hundred pounds each. The average price was about \$3.75 a hundred pounds at St. Louis and Kansas City, \$4.00 a hundred pounds at Chicago. Of course this price varied as it does today.

We bought salt in barrels, hauled them out over the ranch, cut the barrels in halves and put them near watering places.

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There has been some discussion as to how and where the old Chisholm Trail ran. I think there is no doubt but that it originated somewhere near Seymour, Texas, came up through Vernon and Doans Crossing, into Oklahoma missing Altus by going about six miles to the east. Then the Chisholm Trail came by Warren, crossing the north fork of Red River at the foot of the mountains and thence went on to Woodward and Dodge City, Kansas.

In 1849 the Diamond S ranchman drove over this trail some eighty-five thousand head of cattle, one herd after another and not over eight miles apart.

With regard to citizenship I would say that this country had the very best that could be found anywhere. There were a few horse thieves in here, but never molested anyone here. They stole horses in Texas, Louisiana and other places and brought them through here enroute to northern markets.

There were two or three fellows who used to stop at our headquarters and eat. Often times we were not at camp and the men would cook and leave before we returned, leaving a note to say that they had enjoyed the meal.

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We had good blankets, overcoats and other things lying about, but we never missed anything.

The life of the Indians in 1888 was not as savage as in previous years. Although they would wear their war paint and regalia at times as they did before they became civilized, they never gave any serious trouble, and when they were off their reservation tended to their own business and never gave anyone any trouble. But in the days of 1888 and 1889 as the whites began to settle this western country and travel through the Indian Territory, they would have considerable trouble with some of the chiefs of the smaller Indian tribes.

The main trouble was that the Indians would take what the whites had to eat, as the Indians used Government supplies and they were always limited. However

the Indians never killed anyone. They felt that the white man was trespassing on their reserve and for that reason they took his supplies of food.

The mode of living of the Indians was to gather in small groups of seventy-five to two hundred in camps scattered over the reserve. Each camp had as its leader some chief, and at that time the Indians lived in tepees.

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Their women or squaws, as they called them, did all the work, such as getting wood for fuel, pulling grass for their beds, tearing down and moving tepees from one locality to another.

The Indian mode of travel in those days was by pack horses. Their tepees and tepee poles which consisted of two or four poles to each tepee were placed in equal numbers on each side of the pack horse and dragged along as shelves.

The only work done by the bucks, or men was killing antelope or stealing beef. This food was usually eaten raw or partly dried in the sun. The Indians never wasted any part of anything they killed. There were times when they ate wolves and even their dogs. Indian bucks sometimes had from three to eight wives; the braves acquired their wives by trading horses for them.

In those days the Indians had what they called Medicine Men. If any of the tribe was sick the other Indians made music by beating drums. They drank much mescal and they would sometimes drink this mescal prior to making cattle raids.

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The Indians were great gamblers, especially on horse racing and games of monte bank.

The bucks usually rode bareback and always mounted from the right side. The squaws used small wooden frames shaped like saddles, over which blankets were thrown.

When the men hunted antelope they used a trained horse to go in front with a red blanket on it. The attention of the antelope would be attracted by the red blanket, and the Indians taking advantage of the wind were able to get close enough to kill one or two antelope which before were out of range of their guns.

The Indians never had any trouble among themselves in their own tribes and it was the duty of the chief to give his tribe names in their own language for all articles such as wagons, horses used by the whites, as the chief was the supreme ruler and guide of his tribe.

The fact that Indians believed in a Hereafter was shown in their mode of burial. In the early days Indians were buried in the mountains among large rocks. All the Indian's earthly possessions, such as saddles, blankets, beads and trinkets were buried with them.

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I have a number of times found skeletons of Indians beside which were remnants of saddles, guns and other things which had been placed there so that the departed Indian might use them in the Happy Hunting Grounds to which he was supposed to go after death.