

TAYLOR, H. H.

INTERVIEW

#4571

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

TAYLOR, W. H.

INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker's name Zaidee B. Bland.

This report made on (date) June 25, 1937.

1. Name W. H. Taylor.

2. Post Office Address Blair, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) One block east of school.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth Missouri.

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

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 7.

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Zaidee B. Bland,
Interviewer.
June 25, 1937.

An Interview With W. H. Taylor,
Blair, Oklahoma.

I was born in Missouri, but came to Texas before I can remember. By the time I was in my teens I was hanging out around cow camps and begging to be taken on. I hung around John Merchant, but the first time I was trusted to ride with a bunch that was driving "doggies" was for Herring Brothers.

In 1881 I drove through here with a herd of 3,000 doggies, crossing at Doan's Crossing and driving to Dodge City, Kansas. I helped drive several herds through from Austin, Texas, to the Buzzard Roost Ranch near Fort Supply. I drove for Doc Day who owned the biggest hotel in Austin in those days and a big ranch near Fort Supply. The cattle would be bought up in Van Zant, Henderson, and adjoining counties and when we had from 2,000 to 4,000 in a herd we would start North. We did not try to make over four or five miles a day unless we had to rush to water for camp. There was a chuck wagon and a cook in our crew. Each man had to have six mounts, and one horse had to be a

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special night horse. These were mixed herds; cows, calves, yearlings, as well as good beef cattle. We pushed them all along till we got to Buzzard Roost, where we left all but the good beef. These we pushed through to Dodge City. There were always some of the cattle too weak to make such a long journey and were always falling behind, sometimes falling down.

We would help those wild cattle up on their feet and they would take out after us. If we couldn't beat them to our horses we would have to pull our six gun and shoot them, and we had to shoot a lot of them. We worried along with the weak ones until we would get to the Indian Territory for we knew we would have to give the Indians from one to half dozen, depending on how many came to meet us. I have seen the time we boys would have to stand four to each wagon wheel to keep the squaws away from our chuck and we always gave them beeves, as many as they wanted, and they never seemed to care if they were well or sick, fat or lean - a doggie was a doggie to them.

The Cheyennes gave us the most trouble. They demanded more to cross their part of the reservation than any of the

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other tribes. We always thought it the best policy to buy our way rather than to make them hostile, for it was easy enough to have trouble with them. One night some of us boys went to an Indian camp and found a lot of ladies' scalps hanging to their ridge poles and some of them were fresh. We staged a little fight all our own right there and I don't imagine uncle Sam knows to this day who killed that little bunch of Indians or why. Sometimes we had to drive the cows through rivers that were wide and deep and they would get to milling and a cowboy would have to ride in among them and lead the way out on the side we wanted the cattle to go. We used to sell fat beeves to the Chickasaw Nation. I sold 800 beeves at Pauls Valley once. When the doggies were sold at Dodge City all the boys would be paid off. The saddles and bridles would be shipped back to Austin, the horses driven back to the ranch at Buzzard Roost and we boys would make "whoopie" and wander back south to begin to buy up for another travel.

I stopped over at old Navajo one winter and thought I would do a little trading of horses and maybe buy up a few beeves of my own to join a big herd as they came through.

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The first thing that happened to me was that two of my horses strayed, or I thought they did. I began to hunt for them. I spent two days looking for them when I met a man from over near Devil's Canyon who said he saw two horses of the description of mine over near the river. I picked up my horses' tracks as soon as I got near the river. I met Two Talk Whitten and asked him about them. He said, "No use you going any farther. I have just come from that direction across the river and I saw nothing of such horses". I did not believe him and went on across after he got out of sight. As soon as I got out of the water I picked up my horses and Whitten's horse's track by which one could tell plainly Whitten had been driving my horses into Devil's Canyon. I did not go but a little ways until I found a bunch of horses and the first ones I saw were my two. I drove my horses back across the river and left them graze while I went up to Whitten's house and laid the law down to him. I told him I had heard of the men coming in here and losing both horses and cows and people believed they were driven into the canyon on purpose but it wouldn't be mine or I would be going in there to

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see about them and for him to stay away from Navajo if he wanted to be healthy while I was there. Of course he claimed he knew nothing about it. The Indians called him "Two Talk" because one day he got caught under his wagon bed and some one came along and he heard them coming and began to beg them to help him out. He would beg in a coarse voice and then in a fine one. After listening a little while the boys rode on saying, "If there is two of you boys under there and can't get out you ought to stay". He talked in two voices to the day of his death. He was an unusually large man, standing more than six feet in his stockings and weighing always above two hundred pounds.

In 1891 I leased 300 acres of land down on the river near Doan's Crossing and brought my wife up. I paid \$45.00 a year for the land. I built a two room house and fenced and put in cultivation ninety acres of land. I stayed there eight years.

We played a lot of jokes on the United States Marshal. I had a friend just over in the reservation. One night I knew the marshal was staying the night with him, so I got a pint of whiskey and my brother and I rode over. I left

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my horse in a fence corner some way from the house and crawled up and hid in a fence corner and cocked my rifle and waited. Brother rode boldly up to the house and called. The marshal came out and brother said, "You couldn't use a little whiskey could you". The sheriff reached his hand as though to take the bottle to have a sip with one hand and with the other he drew his six gun and said, "Yes! I'll take a little sip and take you along with it". I rose up out of the fence corner with my rifle and said, "I guess you won't fellow, drop those guns. Unfasten your belt and drop it, too, and now reach. He went back in the house. We went on down by the barn where our friend was and told him to go on in and comfort his friend and tell him he could get his guns at the nearest neighbors. "Well, I swear," the sheriff said, "I never thought to get my guns back so easy. I thought it was a real holdup".

I have been in white camps where they had buffalo tongues by the thousand hanging to dry and buffalo hides rolled in a mound as high as this building. (a one story brick). They killed them by the thousand just for their tongues and hides and left the carcass to rot or for the wolves.

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Talk about jokes. My partner and I came to the biggest rock one time and it had cut out on it "Turn me over and see what is under me". My partner said, "Let's turn her over, Bill". I took a look and said, "It'll take a horse a week to move that booger". "Let's try anyway". We heaved and we pulled and we prized. At last we had her up and tipped her over. On the under side was carved "Turn me back and let me fool someone else. We did.