

BRITCHARD, CORA.

INTERVIEW

10200

93

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

PRITCHARD, CORA

INTERVIEW

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Field Worker's name Ruby Wolfenbarger

This report made on (date) March 11 1938

1. Name Cora Pritchard

2. Post Office Address Sentinel, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 5 Year 1896

5. Place of birth Doaksville, Indian Territory

6. Name of Father E.W. Pritchard Place of birth Georgia

Other information about father Rancher and farmer

7. Name of Mother Lizzie Willis Place of birth Doaksville

Other information about mother Housewife.

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 3.

PRITCHARD, CORA

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Ruby Wolfenbarger,
Investigator,
March 11, 1938.

An Interview with Cora Pritchard,
Sentinel, Oklahoma.

My grandfather, R. B. Willis, was born in Mississippi about 1838. He was a Choctaw Indian. Reservations had been assigned to the Indians of the Choctaw and Creek tribes and some of the tribes began to move to the Indian Territory in 1825. In 1842 the Willis family along with other families started out for the Territory. They came in covered wagons. There was much sickness among the Indians and some of them were homesick and didn't like the way that they were being driven from their old homes there in Mississippi. My people took up their one hundred and sixty acres of land, which they had been given by the government, five miles north of Fort Towson. The first thing they did was to cut down trees to build a log house and to clear the land for cultivation.

After my grandfather's parents had passed away he leased other land around there.

He put out a large pecan grove. There was lots of

PRITCHARD, CORA

INTERVIEW

10200

- 2 -

wild fruit of many varieties, including plums, grapes, blackberries, dewberries, huckleberries and strawberries around there. My grandfather had over one hundred head of cattle bearing the R. B. brand. He also had several hundred head of wild horses. He went back to Mississippi and bought about fifty slaves. In the early days a good slave was worth lots of money. He treated his slaves very kindly, in later years when he was forced to sell them they didn't want to leave him. My mother said that it took two hams of meat every morning for their breakfast.

My grandfather built a large double log house when he took charge of the old home. The inside was painted white. It had two chimneys, one in each end, also had two large cupboards, one in each end, one of these cupboards was used for dishes and the other for bed linens. These cupboards extended from the floor to the ceiling. The first cook stove that my grandparents ever owned they got from Texas. My grandfather put it up and then made a fire in it and not knowing much about it, built the fire in the oven instead of in the fire box. Sometime later he decided that he had put the fire in the wrong place and had to clean it out before my

FRITCHARD, CORA

INTERVIEW

10200

- 3 -

grandmother could bake bread.

There was a trading post at Doaksville where they got their supplies. My grandfather also hauled freight to this trading post from Texas. He kept several men on the road all the time. My father and his brothers and sisters were educated at the old Spencer Academy, eight miles from their home. They went to school on horseback.

We were located two miles from the old Fort. The fort was located on a rolling prairie on Gates Creek. Soldiers were scattered here to keep peace. There was a large rock chimney which was nine feet wide, six feet deep and four feet from the stone floor to the arch. It is said that a whole beef could be roasted and still there would be enough room for the baking and boiling of a meal for the soldiers. The north side of the fort rested on the bluffs of Gates Creek. One side of the wall and the port holes are still standing. Fort Towson was abandoned as a military post in 1852. There is a large cemetery in Doaksville, which has graves that date back one hundred twenty-five years. My grandfather lived to be ninety-eight years old.