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INTERVIEW

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field worker's name Nannie Lee Burns

This report made on (date) April 29 1938

1. This legend was secured from (name) Mrs. Eva Price

Address Guapay, Oklahoma.

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story As she experienced it.

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 8

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Nannie Lee Burns
Investigator
April 29, 1938.

An interview with Mrs. Eva Price,
Quapaw, Oklahoma.

Both of my parents were brought to the State of Illinois when young by their parents from eastern states. Here they grew up, attending the schools of that state. They had comfortable homes and did not suffer during the Civil War days as I am told that the people of this part of the country did.

My husband, Woodard Price, was born in 1854 at Danville, Illinois, and here April 1, 1860, I, too, was born. Our younger days were spent in that country and in the local schools there. Those were pleasant days, plenty of school, plenty of fun and good churches.

But with the passing of the years the farmers there heard of the wonderful country west of the great river and thinking that they had had the cream from their own land and that land could be had in the new country for homesteading, began to think more each year of the new country. When families would be together visiting, they would talk of the new land. Some of their friends had been there, had seen it and had returned and told how wonderful the land was and how free, so a

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colony of friends and their families decided that they would come and make homes for themselves so when I was a young woman, we came. My husband and I were ^{not} married but as our parents were coming, we came along. Some settled in the eastern part of Kansas, liking this country and finding that they could buy and rent land here much cheaper than they could in Illinois. This land had been settled and improved by the different Indian tribes that had been removed to the Indian Territory some years before so we did not have the experience of living in dugouts and sod houses as did those who went farther west into the state. From the beginning we had a very comfortable home and it looked as though we were settled. When the talk of the Run for Land in 1889 was heard on every side, my father and two brothers decided

that they would try it so they came and waited for the eventful day but failed to locate a claim so they returned after that experience to our home in Kansas. We were not far from Fulton, Kansas, the home of Samuel Abrams, the white friend of the Quapaws. A few years before this, Abrams, at the repeated requests of the Quapaws, had moved his family to their nation on the State Line in the Indian Country just south of the

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Kansas Line and since he had arrived here had been busy getting them resettled and the absent Quapaws returned to their nation, trying in this way to save their country for them. After consultations with friends he had had this country surveyed and most of them had selected a forty acre tract along Spring River in the woods for their homes; each member of the tribe had two hundred acres additional land out on the prairie which before this time had been leased to the cattlemen for a few cents per acre. The friend of the Quapaws, Abrams, realizing that they should have some income and knowing that they were not successful farmers even if they had had anything to farm with, had interested several families in and around Fulton to come here and rent or lease this surplus two hundred acres from them and to improve it and farm it. My husband, hearing much about it, decided that he would come and investigate it and see what the possibilities were; we had been married only the year before, in 1891 at Redfield, Kansas. So in the Fall of 1892, my husband came down with some of the other prospectors and looked the country over. Thinking that he could locate here and have greater advantages here than we would have in Kansas, he

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leased through Mrs. Abrams the two ^{hundred} acres belonging to Sig-a-dah, his white name being Silas Hominy, which land was not far from the present town of Quapaw. This was only a prairie which was covered with blue stem grass; my husband paid the owner a small sum as rent each year, and in addition he was to do all of his own improving. Mr. Price remained here that winter and fall and built a two room box house and a small barn, dug a well and began to fence the sod that was to be broken for the next year's crop. Of course the first year we did not get in a very large crop but as we had no children, I stayed out of doors and did what I could and each year we increased our acreage until at one time we were farming a section and had two hundred acres in hay land.

We did our trading at Baxter Springs, Kansas, and as the owner of the land did not have the money to live on, each year, we would stand for him at the store in Baxter Springs the amount of our rent due him.

We lived on this farm for thirty-seven years and later built a better house and improved it in a more substantial way.

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When we first came here there were no schools except the Quapaw Mission which was discontinued about that time and replaced with the Catholic Mission nearly two miles east and a little south of Quapaw so we had no Sunday School or church and our chief Sunday amusement was to go to the woods on Spring River near the Devil's Promenade and watch the Indians play football. I soon learned to know all the Quapaws and soon found and made friends among them and they have continued my friend ever since but all of the older ones who were here then are now gone and life among them is not the same. Occasionally, the Quapaws have a football game still and a Stomp Dance but it is not the same as they used to meet and hold their games in the open forest and their Stomp Dances around the fire. The dances were sacred to them then and they all realized it but they were friendly and allowed their white friends who did not realize the significance of these dances to take part in them; the dance has changed much and many of the older Quapaws resent the way in which the many visitors regard it today.

The most interesting part of this country is the country

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around Spring River at the Promenade. Before it was fenced it was the favorite picnic ground in this country and there was seldom a Sunday that you would not find some people there; they even drove here from Kansas. The entrance goes in from the promenade going west from the rocky promenade which is sheltered by the rocky ledge overhanging it. It is a large cave and high enough so that you can stand erect in it. This cave is said to have been one of the hideouts of the James Brothers. On the west bank of the river just south of the promenade is the Lover's Leap just north of the present Spring River Bridge. It was given its name from the old story connected with it of an young Indian couple who when they were refused permission to marry by their parents, threw themselves from its top into the river below.

Other spots of interest in the same vicinity are, the Devil's Tub and Washboard, the Devil's Hollow, the Devil's Crossing and the Blue Hole just below, south of the bridge where so many persons have been drowned while in swimming and the strangest part of it is, that search as men will they are never able to recover the bodies.

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Before the building of the Frisco south from the State line to Miami we could load our hay three miles this side of Baxter Springs at a switch called Fitzer's Switch on the State Line. After Mr. Abrams had the Quapaw Nation surveyed and they had accepted their allotments, he began plans to get a railroad and through his efforts mostly, the Frisco extended its line from the State line to Miami in 1896 and in return for a right-of-way across the Quapaw Nation, the Frisco officials agreed to build a switch and establish a station at the present site in Quapaw. The first buildings in Quapaw besides the station were a store, a blacksmith shop and three hay barns. We were still living on the farm but when the town started we built a store building and a dwelling here but did not move here at that time.

Before then, we had adopted a little girl and there being no school we bought her a pony and she rode to the Catholic Mission to school for a time and then the families living in the vicinity of Quapaw and west of here raised the money among themselves and built a small box building about a mile

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west of Quapaw and called it the Mellon School from the Mellon Ranch there. We used this school for church services and Sunday School until the establishment of Quapaw when the people again by popular subscription raised the money and built a building, the present Methodist Church building. My husband and I gave \$300.00 and seven chairs. It was not for any denomination but was just church and we allowed the different denominations to hold services there and this was the way it was when a denomination that was holding services there unbeknownst to those who had built it sold the building to the Methodists and they still have it.

I was the fourth postmistress of Quapaw during the years of 1927 and 1928. My salary was the cancellations of stamps only. The highest salary for any three months was \$91.00 and that was when they were building the gas line through here. We have had no children of our own but we have raised and educated seven, none of whom were any relation to us. After thirty-seven years on the farm, we left it and made our home here and here some few years ago, my husband died and I have continued to live in the old place alone but cheered often by the visits of my foster children and grandchildren.