

REDFORD, ZACK

SECOND INTERVIEW

#12467

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Form A-(S-149)

BI MAP V. 102  
INDIAN-PIONEER HISTORY PROJECT FOR OKLAHOMA

Field Worker's name Grace Kelley

This report made on (date) December 21, 1937.

1. Name Zack Redford

2. Post office address Dewar, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year 1871

5. Place of birth Missouri

6. Name of Father Marion Redford Place of birth Missouri

Other information of father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Miss Todd Place of birth Kentucky

Other information of mother \_\_\_\_\_

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. (Use additional sheets if suggested subjects are digressions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 7.)

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Grace Kelley, Investigator,  
December 21, 1937.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ZACK REDFORD  
DEWAR, OKLAHOMA.

When I was five years old my father decided to go with a lot of other folk to take up land in Texas as that state had land that you could homestead. My father was a regular pioneer as he would go to a new place and stay long enough to own the place, then sell out and move on to some other locality that was open to homesteaders.

At Baxter Springs there were a number who turned back as they were afraid to cross the Indian Territory. There was a lot of crying at the parting of friends who never expected to see each other again in this world.

There were twenty wagons in the train that finally got started on the way. None of them had stock except their teams. We had two wagons with mule teams but we carried very little furniture. I would call it a camping-out outfit now for we cooked on a campfire and slept on the ground. There were my mother and father and two of us children. The children rode in the back of the wagon.

We passed two Indian villages but I don't remember what tribes they belonged to. Four soldiers rode in front of all

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of the wagons, others were scattered all along the train and then there were some who rode behind. Mother told my sister and me not to raise the wagon sheet, no matter what happened, but I was curious and wanted to see what the Indians looked like, so when we came abreast of a village I peeped out but I was so careful that I don't believe they could have seen me if they had been looking right at the wagon. There were a hundred or more round tepees. They looked like round tents to me but I don't think there were any regular tents in the bunch and I know there were no houses of any kind among them. We didn't camp near those and the soldiers stayed with us until we were quite a way past them.

One night we had camped and an Indian, who could talk English, was talking with my father. He wanted to trade an Indian girl and a pony to my father for my sister and we were very worried for fear father would trade. It seemed to us that, as he would get the best of the bargain, he might be tempted to trade.

I don't know the exact route we took but I entered the Indian Territory at Baxter Springs and I think we came by Muskogee or Fort Gibson. We located at Fort Worth which is

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right south of Gainesville so I imagine we made a diagonal line from Baxter Springs to Gainesville though I couldn't say for certain.

We lived in Texas for ten years and then decided to move to the Territory. I was fifteen years old and my brother had one wagon and a yoke of oxen on this trip.

There was a ferry called Brown's ferry at Gainesville that was run by a white man. From there we followed the Gainesville road to Dougherty.

We stopped on the way and picked cotton for three weeks. The land was good and they got from a half to a bale of cotton to the acre. We were paid a dollar a hundred for picking. (That is from fifteen to twenty-five cents more than they are paying now and it was easier cotton to pick then).

We passed through Berwyn but it was called Henderson's Flat then. I saw Indians near there. We were camped and was told that some Indians were going to drive some cattle across the Washita River so I went down to watch them. Of course I had been told all sorts of stories about the Indians so I was a little afraid of them, yet the same curious streak made me want to see them. Some of the boys wore buckskins and

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but others had on store clothes. Almost every-body wore six-shooters at that time. If you saw somebody without one he was usually a preacher. So these Indians all had six-shooters strapped on. About the time I got a good look at them they all started whooping and shouting to take the cattle go into the river but I forgot all about the cattle and supposed they were really "wild" Indians and I sought safer ground.

My father, Aaron Redford, was a missionary preacher, Baptist; for ten years he was on a route but the rest of the time he just preached here and there as he was a farmer as well as preacher.

His route was from about fifty miles west of Flagfisher and close to Ayre to The Overville and east to T. Shomingo.

He would come in and be at home for two or three days when he got close to home on his trip, then go on to the next stop. He went horseback part of the time but mostly went in a buggy. Usually he would stay with white people but there was one settlement where there were only Indians so he stayed with an Indian family whose children could talk English but the older ones couldn't. He said that the older

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ones sat around and looked friendly but that the younger ones who had gone to school talked with him.

There were forty miles between Dougherty and Bart with not a house between. The settlers called this the Ozark Trail.

I've seen from seventy-five to a hundred deer in a drove from this trail.

One time my sister wrote us that she was coming for a thirty day visit and that she would like to eat so much wild turkey while she was here. Just for fun I went out every morning and got from one to two turkeys. Of course we could not eat them all but there were almost no wild turkeys wasted in those days as they were eaten. Nobody needed to go without meat if they wanted it. They could just go out near the house in the woods and get themselves what they needed. them and by going out in the morning we were sure to get a turkey. People got tired of deer meat more than any other kind of wild game. I don't suppose anyone ever got tired of the turkey if it was cooked right - and there was a good cook.

I've been hunting for rather long and have always had one or two turkeys in my back. Another would come into my

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usually run across the road, and I'd just have to shoot to see if I'd hit it. Then get down and turn it over with my foot to see where it hit. It had to be at least as we had so much that we couldn't use it. There were so many that we never thought the first hit was the one it was now.

There was a station where we had a room, but it was a straw house and we had to sleep on the floor. There was a log school there but no store nor any sign of a town at all when we first located there. Your horse was sick and he came through and gave it the same treatment.

The reason for the name of the town was that there were nearly a hundred acres in the area and not much in cultivation. It was a very good place to live. Straw was ripe and you could eat it and you could with it ever getting up from one place to another. There were no large towns or cities ever seen, but.

It was twelve miles to Gray's River. There were a few deer and some very small deer and some of the deer would locate on the river to feed, which sometimes just required a stop on the river and other times the deer would be all around would flock in and fill the town in no time.



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White Frost had the first large general merchandise store but a Mr. Major had the first little store before Frost came.

The reason Dougherty was called Henderson's flat before the railroad came through was because Henderson had a sawmill there. There were just a few men working for him but everyone who had any buildings that were built out of lumber got that lumber from his mill in one way or another. Some of them went out and cut the trees and hauled them to his mill. He cut them for a share of what was cut. People exchanged articles instead of using money. They didn't have so very much money but got along pretty well without it. If someone would want to buy lumber from him, but didn't have the money to pay for it, he would pay for the lumber with a hog, yearling or work. It was easier to get by then for the neighbors shared anything they had - and they were always paid back what they loaned no matter how small the amount nor how large it was.

There were not many sawmills in that part of the country and most people used the plain logs that were not cut nor changed. After the railroad came through more people bought lumber and had it shipped from Texas.

There were only two houses better than ours so when I describe it don't think that I was ashamed of it. Everyone had houses similar and they were all we knew.

The one we built was a log house with two rooms. There was a window in the end of one room but there wasn't any sash nor glass in it. There was a planer slide so that we could have light when necessary. I have eaten many dinners with a lamp burnin' for it would be too cold or raining so hard that we couldn't open the window. The door was home-made, of lumber and had a button to fasten it shut. There was a fireplace in one room but we had a stove to cook on in the other.

The houses that were larger than ours were two log houses about eight feet apart but under one roof, the space between them was a kind of hall, in other ways they were like ours.

The first summer we didn't use matches because we ran out of matches and would have had to go into Texas after more. We pulled up some logs and set them on fire and kept them burning until we got quite a bit of ashes. Then we let one burn all the time. Whenever we were sent out after some coals

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to start a fire Mother would always caution me to be sure and cover the fire up good with the ashes so that it would keep. If I hadn't covered it, the log would have burned up and gone out or else would have gone out without burning. In either case we would have been without any way to build a fire to cook or wash with. As it was safer we didn't want to keep it in the house.

FREIGHT WAGON

drove a freight wagon for my father and took the produce to Gainesville, Texas, and returned with provisions. (I never called him "Father" at that time, though. All the youngsters that time called their parents "Pa and Ma").

There were eight yoke of oxen to a wagon and a trailer was fastened to the wagon. It was two wagons hitched together with all the oxen to the first wagon. When I came to creeks or bog holes I'd have to unhitch the wagons and pull the first wagon across, then go back and get the trailer wagon. If the crossing was a bad one, it was a very hard road.

About ten or fifteen miles this side of Red River I had to pull over about a mile from the old road. There was always an axe and hatchet in the wagon and a tree was where we

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couldn't go around it I'd cut it down, hitch a yoke of steers to the tree and pull it out of the way and go on. It would take eight or ten days to make the trip and I never had a passenger, although once in a while a boy traveler would camp all night with me. I'd make seven or eight miles a day or twenty miles a day, just owing to the kind of weather and the condition of the roads.

There was a cotton gin at Mill Creek but no railroad. One groceryman took charge of the farmer's cotton after it had been ginned. I hauled it to Gainesville (about sixteen bales), dumped it in the yards and got the price for it which I took back and gave to the groceryman.

Before leaving he had told me where to go for the supplies that he needed from the wholesale house. Some of the supplies were groceries as the women made most of the clothes at home. Mother made all my clothes, except one suit, until I was twenty years old.

#### BUYING SALT.

On two or three different trips I hauled twenty-five barrels of salt that weighed two hundred pounds a barrel. That would be twenty-five hundred pounds of salt on the one

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trip. I had tarpaulins to cover the wagons coming back but never bothered to cover the cotton as the rain wouldn't hurt it.

Everyone bought salt by the barrel in the fall and several times father bought two barrels for it took lots to put the salt down where they had sheep and they wanted enough to last all the year. It would hang in the barrels and he would have to take a crowbar and pry a big chunk out. Then we would take a mule and haul it to the stave.

THEY WERE QUARTERS.

In those days Christmas was always celebrated with fireworks like the Fourth of July is now. But the Fourth of July was celebrated by picnics; once in a while a merchant would have fireworks left over from Christmas and would put it out for sale but that was very rare.

Mr. Majors, who had the little store at Dougherty, got a pretty good supply of fireworks for Christmas one year. Some young men got too much to drink, went in the store and put him out of the store and took almost all of his supply of fireworks and left.

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For some reason none of them were hurt when they shot them off and they had a grand display. The next day when they sobered up they went and asked him what the charge was and paid off that other time they found cheaper fireworks.

Another time he drilled two inch holes in post-oak trees and put a pound of powder in each hole. He made twenty-five holes in all. He had a Christmas gun and he want to tell you they would do it a cannon.

## MAIL CARRIAGE.

Mr. Majors put a Post Office in as soon as he heard the railroad was coming through, in a little store not over twelve foot square.

After the railroad came through, Perry Wellington got a contract to carry the mail from Dougherty to Mill Creek and on to T. shoring. He was to carry the mail for thirty-five dollars a month and he hired me to drive the coach for him for a dollar and a half a day, which was more than he was getting. I know that sounds funny but he was an honest profit. Some days there would be enough passengers to pay him fifteen dollars for the trip, other days there would be less but there was always someone. I was very young at

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that time, between fifteen and seventeen, but Mr. Wellington knew me real well and he didn't matter at all. They had to have confidence in you before they would give you a job of any kind and if they had enough confidence to give you one job they'd give you another.

As my father was a preacher he never carried a gun and the first one that I bought, it was like the other young men, he laughed at me so, much that I didn't have the nerve to wear it. He said that to wear a gun was a good way to get in trouble that you'd be hard to get out of and that he never had needed one. But when they gave me the mail route they really had me to carry a six-shooter and Winchester, too. The Winchester laid on the seat beside me.

We had four horses and one day we would use one, then of two horses, then the next day we used the other two and let the first one rest. I drove them at a good trot the most of the time.

There was an excitement at the time - trouble between the whites and Indians - and my father begged me not to go but there was no way out of going.

I had an Indian friend at Dougherty, who was named Tom Hayes, so I got Tom to go with me on the trip. We stayed up

all night visiting his friends so I was never afraid of an Indian after that. I was his friend, he was their friend, so they were my friends. I met a very pretty Indian maid and so I took that trip many times after I quit carrying the mail. I believe I have Indian friends who would step out and see me in my place. I know I have if they are still living but they would be dead now. If you treated them right they'd show you a whole new world so it was the best policy to treat them right. They were good unless you made them bad and then they wouldn't do anything for you at all.

#### MILL CREEK.

It was twelve miles to Mill Creek, which had a store with a Post Office in it, a cotton gin, blacksmith shop, and grist mill.

When we went to the grist mill we would take two or three bushels of our own corn and about twenty bushels of the different neighbors' corn. It would be two or three months before my turn to go to the mill again. The other neighbors would make the trips in the meantime.



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If a neighbor got sick his crop was taken care of and worked the same as if he were doing it. They set the days to work out the crops and everyone did the work for him until he was able to do his own work.

NO GRAVEYARD AT FIRST.

There wasn't a graveyard when we moved to this community but the next year when the railroad came a lady, whose husband was working on it, died and they brought her to our settlement and laid her out. That was the first one. That was in 1887 and the cemetery is still in use.

WORKED ON THE RAILROAD.

I was a water boy for the grading crew and then the train crew. Both transients and farmers worked on the railroad; when they would come to a settlement all in that community who wanted to work were allowed to.

There were camps all along the way - about ten or fifteen miles apart. A hundred and fifty to two hundred persons would be in one camp. They always had a commissary where you could buy anything that you wanted. An engine was kept running as close to the grading as possible. It carried

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the ties, rails and things like that. As soon as the grading was made the ties and rails were put down, the train was pushed out, and it made two miles an hour. The other crews would follow along it and so on. About five or six miles behind it was pretty so that you could go on into Gainesville, Texas.

The way they also had the dirt from the cuts to the lower places. The engine pulled the dirt onto the flat-cars when they were coming a certain distance, the engine pulling the flat-cars back to a lower place and they shoveled it off. There were motor shovels so all the shoveling was done by men or horses.

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The largest blast that I knew anything about was when they literally blew the end off of a mountain. (Arbuckle). They put five hundred kegs, (not pounds) of powder, cuts and rolled a rock as big as a house into the river. All the men had to do was to clear up the ground. It shook the windows and knocked things from shelves for four miles around. Everyone knew that they were going to have the blast but didn't know the date it would happen.

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## ROCK QUARRY.

A quarry was started four or five miles south of Dougherty, and a half mile from the blasting of the mountain, and a rock crusher was put in. They made white flinty rock into ballast for the roadbed. (These are still in use.)

## A FINISHED RAILROAD.

The first coaches would come on to the depot as soon as they were made. There were two coaches and a baggage car. The last few miles of travel would be real slow but would be faster when they were where the ground had been worked and finished.

The mail was brought on the train as soon as the depot was established or a very short time afterward.

## HART IN 1888.

When I was seventeen years old we moved to where Hart is now. At that time there was no store nor post office. There were twelve white families living on farms in that settlement. The next year lots of people came in and they got a post office. We went to Stonewall for our groceries

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but that was too far to go for the mail. Every two weeks I would go by horseback to Wynnewood for the mail. That would have been seventy miles for the round trip if I had followed the road but when we went horseback we never followed a road. We would just set a course or get the direction to the place where we wanted to go, then go across the prairie and woods. The horse could cross a stream any place if it came to one without thinking about a ford or ferry so even that didn't worry a person.

When a white man came into the Territory he was made to pay five dollars for a permit to live and obtain a living in the Territory - that was at first. This permit allowed the person to own four milch cows and a team. Nothing was said about hogs but they let you have as many as you wanted. There was free range and hogs could keep fat the year round, so everyone had plenty of hogs. Once in a while a farmer would have seventy-five or a hundred head of cattle and get an Indian to lay claim on them so he would not have to pay extra on them.

If the man didn't pay the permit all they could do was for the militia (whites and maybe an Indian Policeman) to make him load up and escort him to a state line.

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As soon as they left him there was nothing to keep him from loading up and returning to a different part of the Territory. I only knew of three families being put out and they were too contrary to pay the permit.

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About four years after we came here everyone decided not to pay and the militia would have had to move the whole Territory out so they discontinued the permits.

The leasing of land is hard to explain. There was no money exchanged from either side but both parties promised to pay the other a certain sum of money which they both knew that they wouldn't need to pay. The Indian promised to pay twenty-four dollars an acre for every acre that was put under cultivation. The white man was to build a house, barn, dig a well of water, and fence all the land that was in cultivation with a hog-proof fence (rail fence). And he was to pay the Indian a dollar a year rent on each acre. The rent was just discounted from what the Indian owed so really the Indian was giving the white man a farm for twenty-four years. Then if he should decide to move he left the improvements. As a general thing I would make an agreement between the Indian and another white man who would take my improvements

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for a certain price. There were lots of newcomers coming through so it was easy to find someone to take your place. You could lease as many acres as you could put into cultivation. If you kept the Indian a friend to you he would work it any way to help you - like claiming your cattle so that you could own them.

#### OPENING OF THE "POT" COUNTRY.

Father next filed on forty acres of ground in the "Pot" country. As you see, he kept going to the newer places and starting new homes. A person had to stay on a claim for five years to get a patent, then he could make a deed when he sold it. It was ridge and timber land where he was. He built a good three-room house, left four acres in timber because he might need it and put thirty-six acres in cultivation. There were two pieces of land vacant two years after he filed on his, one was an eighty and the other was a forty acre tract, and they were both a half mile from his place. I could have filed on them if I had wanted them but I knew that I wouldn't stay for five years on any one place. He stayed long enough to sell and give a deed, then he filed at Kingfisher.

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He sold his cotton but the corn and potatoes were kept for his own use and he never thought of selling the chickens and eggs. Mother would raise from two to three hundred chickens in a year but I don't suppose she knew just how many she did have. Whenever she wanted to, she would go out and kill a couple but she very seldom killed one at a time.

In 1895 I came back from Texas on a train to Wynnewood, then walked twelve miles to my sister's and she took me twenty miles to where I was going the next day. I never thought anything about walking twenty miles then for if we didn't have a horse, we walked.

CENTER.

In 1895 Center had a population of five hundred but everything has moved to Ada since the railroad was built. I worked at the cotton gin as there was lots of cotton around Center. I also got married there.

For thirty-five or forty days the gin never stopped. The crews worked and they worked for twelve hours a day instead of the hours we have now. Cotton came from all directions and it was thirty-five miles to the nearest railroad at Wynnewood.

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One time I took the cotton and sold it and when I had paid the bills I had three hundred and fifty dollars in my pocket. I never was afraid of being robbed by an Indian but I wasn't so sure about the whites. We had a lot of good whites but there were some that were not so good. I decided to wait until sundown and then drive home at night. The moon was shining brightly.

I saw two men walking toward me after I had gone about the right distance from town for a hold-up. I raised the sideboard and laid the money under it and pressed the sideboard down to hold it. When they stopped me they told me that they had camped down the road and their horses had got away. They asked me if I had seen them and I had passed them about a hundred yards back. They then led me and I suppose they found the horses in a little while for they had been grazing along the road.

ADA.

There was one store and a blacksmith shop but I don't remember names as I would like to. Then when the railroad came, all the little country stores flocked into Ada.



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## HUNTING.

I use to hunt a lot just for sport. At night I hunted for raccoons, opossums, fox. The skins were so cheap that I hardly ever skinned an opossum. A big raccoon would bring a quarter, an opossum had to be a good and big one to bring a nickel. I had seven hounds that enjoyed the hunting as much as I did.

## DOCTORS.

There was a doctor at Wynnewood and one at Stonewall. Some of the people liked one and others liked the other one. Both of them came to Hart when they were sent for. They would charge ten dollars for a twenty-five mile trip.

My mother, Priscilla Redford, was a doctor but didn't have a diploma. She had her saddlebags and pony and they would send for ten or fifteen miles around to get her. They paid her for what she did for them. If there was something serious the matter she told them to go for one of the other or real doctors. She always doctored us herself and I don't think we ever were very sick for she started in on us at the first sign of our feeling badly.

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Bill Moody was the man gathering the wild horses at Hart, but I was one of the ones helping him. There were forty in one ~~drove~~ and they were about seven miles south of Hart, between there and Sulphur. Sulphur was just a settlement but there were white people there. Some one had cased the springs there with hollow logs which had been bored all around to let the water out.

To catch the wild horses we built wings of brush for a half mile, in a V shape, with the corral at the narrow end. There was a wide gate as an opening into the corral. It was made out of logs instead of poles so that it would be more substantial than the ones used at the farms. The ends of the logs were notched and they were laid like the walls of a house and as high as the house. The corners were braced by a post being set deep in the ground and a log leaning, or braced, against it. It had to be built stout so that they wouldn't knock it down when they would run and jump up against it.

It was just as dangerous to be in that corral after we had got behind them and crowded them until they ran into it, as to be in a lion's den. They would fight you and they did

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not kick either; they came at you head first, biting and pawing. They didn't do that if they could get away but as a last chance at freedom.

After they were in the corral, a horse was roped around the neck and he'd have to be choked until he fell. Then a rope would be put on his head and feet to hold him and the first was loosened so it wouldn't choke him to death. Once in a while it would kill him before they could get it off.

NORMAN, IN 1897.

Norman was a good sized town in 1897; the Asylum for Insane was there but every third house was empty. There were five or six stores. Briggs and Runyon owned the largest.

There was a driveway between the two buildings at the asylum and lots of times I have driven a span of mules in there and sold a whole wagonload of truckgarden stuff to the institution.

The railroad came to Norman in 1898. The schools were there before I went there.