

RIDER, LOUISA

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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 26, 1938

1. This legend was secured from (name) Louisa Rider,

Address o Clint Rider, Afton, Oklahoma.

This person is (~~not~~ female) ~~white~~ Indian,

If Indian, give tribe Cherokee.

2. Origin and history of legend or story _____

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 18

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Nannie Lee Burns,
Investigator,
April 26, 1938.

Interview with Louise Rider,
C/o-Clint Rider,
Afton, Oklahoma.

My mother was Louisa Rutherford ^{Norwood} Rider, born in the
Hiwassee Purchase in Tennessee, a Cherokee. My father
was Thomas R. Norwood, a Methodist Preacher, born and
raised near the Arkansas and Oklahoma line.

I was born July 2, 1860, in Benton County, Arkansas,
two miles from the old Cherokee Line Road. My mother died
when I was five days old and I was the oldest of my father's
children as he afterward married again. Much of my early
days were spent with my grandparents, the Norwoods.

Thomas Norwood and his wife, Salinda, my grandparents,
bought four hundred acres when they came here. During the
days of Fort Wayne, my grandfather peddled hogs to that
place, which was seven or eight miles from their home and
my grandmother made "fried peach pies" which she sold at
the Fort and earned enough from their sale to buy her an
Indian pony.

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My uncles, the Horwoods, were in the Glanville ^{War}
 Battle with the Osages. During the battle the Cherokees
 bottled up some Osages and many, many years later when
 they were found it was called a ^{prisoner} ^{of war}.

Once the Cherokee law was if you were caught harboring
 or feeding Tom Starr, the punishment was hanging. One
 day he came to my aunt's house and asked her for something
 to eat. She gave him what she had, including corn bread
 and meat and he sat down on the porch to eat it and when
 she asked if he was not afraid, he said he would watch out.
 While he was sitting there eating a deer came up the lane
 from the woods and passed the house and he got up and said
 that he must be going and soon some men came from the same
 way looking for him. At night, he would sleep by a pond
 and if the frogs stopped croaking, he would get up and
 move. When he came to the woods, he would enter if the
 birds were singing but if they were not he would not enter
 as they would stop their singing just as the frogs stopped
 croaking at the approach of strangers. The old Cherokees

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were real spiritualists and much of their lore was associated with the birds, animals, etc.

At the opening of the Civil War, my father joined the Union Army and was in the Battle of Fayetteville where the Union Forces won.

Grandmother Norwood's house was burned during the War and after the War we moved back to Norwood Prairie. Uncle Ned England had two little one-room log houses left on his place over in Washington County. My father began to hew the pine logs for another home and soon we had a double log house. Grandmother leased her place for five years for the tenant to build her a house on it and when I was five years old, here I started to school. I walked four miles. All of the rest of the families were Rebels, I was the only Federal and the children called me the "Little Lousy Federal". The teacher took me one day and looked me over and then she told the rest of them that I was a clean little girl. We only had three months of school in my younger days. My next school was in a little log building at the end of the prairie.

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Life for us and for those around us was hard in those days, so much property had been destroyed. People were living in caves and any other makeshifts that they could find. Their stock was gone and in most cases they did not even have any furniture except what the men could make. In the beginning the Cherokees had made homes here in a new country without anything and so most of them began again but some of the fields did not have to be recleared and a few buildings were standing so as the years passed, they managed to add to what they already had, to gather together some stock, put in a little more ground each year and to raise a little more each year while the women folks, from the flax that they raised and from the wool of the sheep, began to make their thread and to spin the cloth for clothes for the different members of the family, weave blankets and cloth for the other bed-coverings, etc.

Why, I was baptized in a linsey dress, the cloth for which I helped to weave.

The Christian Advocate was the only newspaper that we had in the house. My father wrote an article for it.

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After I was married to Charlie Rider, August 24, 1884, we went to live at the Hills. My husband was an Indian Police as was John Barbee living here and they often worked together. Frequently, I was alone but I could ride and was a good shot and always kept my gun at the house.

Through my husband's work, I have had a wide knowledge of the different outlaws and bad men of those days. Our home at the Hills was eight miles northwest of Pryor. We were living here when the Daltons held up a train at Adair. There were only two trains a day each way on the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad then. The marshals and police got word of the intended holdup which was to be staged that night as the train neared Adair. Dr. Goff had just come to that place from Saint Louis and he and another doctor had been out in the country that day but had returned and were sitting on the porch of the little hotel when they were told by the officers of the intended holdup. Dr. Goff said that he had always wanted to see a holdup, so he and his friend continued to sit in the shade

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on the porch. It was a bright moon-lit night, the officers had boarded the train farther down the track and as the train neared Adair the gang divided and part stepped on the west side of the track and the balance on the east. The officers killed one of the gang and drove the others off and as they left they spied the white shirts of the two doctors on the porch and as the Daltons passed they fired below the white shirts, Dr. Goff was shot in the ~~legs~~ and the other doctor was shot in the heel. Realizing that they would have to come into the open for help, Dr. Goff said, "We will have to crawl to the train. I've got forty dollars in my pocket and I'll put it under the porch". They put the wounded doctors on the train and brought them to Vinita and there they cut off one of Doctor Goff's legs and he died.

Another time, my husband, in company with John Barbee, came up with Adams, a bootlegger and bad-man. Adams was riding a good horse and leading one on which was his pack containing five gallons of whiskey, one gallon of wine, his bed and camp outfit and a new saddle.

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Adams' gun jammed, so Charlie got the drop on him and took him prisoner. My husband's girth broke and he handed his gun to Barbée and told him to guard Adams while he fixed it. Adams, watching his chance, jumped on the other man, knocked him down and took his gun and then he said to him, "You are going to that timber, I am going to ride there with a gun on you". Adams got away but they had his pack-horse.

Charlie brought the things home and received a telegram to report at Muskogee to help settle some trouble with the coal miners living below there. This left me at home alone with my son, Clint, who was ten years old. I

had the man's gun, a Winchester, and my son's target when a neighbor rode up and told me that Adams had returned and had sent him to tell us that he wanted his things and that he was coming after them. He came shortly after that and first asked for his liquor saying, "I guess Rider has drunk that". I replied that the evidence, meaning the liquor, had been taken to Vinita. He saw his saddle hanging up in the house, entered and got it and went to the lot where the

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horse was and saddled the horse and during this time he never put the gun out of his hand; he saddled his horse with the gun still in his hand. Later, one day when Charlie was in Vinita, they told him that they had Adams in the Marshal's office wounded and when Charlie went in and he saw him, Adams said, "There is the only man that ever got the drop on me".

You know how the name of "bootlegger" came into use, don't you? The Indian country has always been supposed to have prohibition and in the early days when there were distilleries along the state line, especially at Southwest City, Missouri, and Galena, Kansas, the men wore boots with big high tops and they would buy the whiskey, mostly in gallon lots, and then put it in pint bottles and ride around the country with these bottles in the tops of their boots and sell the liquor to the people, hence the name bootleggers.

I saw Jesse James at Vinita once at a fair. There were two snow-white wagons that had brought in race horses and they were getting ready for the race when a neighbor, George Clark, who was something of a bully came along and told some

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men to get off the fence around the track. When he came to the man who was Jesse James, who had not moved, he said, "Get off" and started to push him off when he made no move. James took hold of him and as he went off the fence, he took Clark with him over the fence outside. Clark doubled up his quirt to strike when others interfered, and then Clark told James not to re-enter the race grounds. James quietly walked to the ticket window and, laying down the money, asked for a ticket. The agent refused and then he saw a gun leveled at him and James said, "This means two tickets, I've a horse running in there and I'm going to see the race". He got his ticket and entered and Jim Hall who had recognized Jesse James, went to Clark and told him to let those men alone.

We were young and jolly in those days and had lots of company. We never played cards at home but we did dance, play dominoes, etc., and often folks would come and stay all night with us. One night at our home, I saw my husband keep looking at the window behind me. As soon as I had a chance, I said to him, "What are you watching?" He replied

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that he saw Charlie Keys, a white man and an outlaw, mashing his face against the window. The next morning my husband found where someone had slept in a bed of shucks at the barn and later where a horse had been fed. Keys was caught and served his time and three years later my husband met him at Nowata and asked him if he had not slept in his barn one night, the night that he saw him at the window. He replied that he had and he had come there that night because he was hungry. Looking into the room he saw persons there who would have caused trouble if they had seen him so he thought perhaps Charlie would come out and he would ask him for something to eat but when he did not, he had spent the night at the barn and left very early the next morning.

In my girlhood days my father had a sawmill and two outlaws came to the neighborhood and worked for him until it was found out who they were. During this time one of the men had married Carrie Whitney, a girl in our neighborhood. Later, the man was killed near Muskogee and left two

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good horses and some things and they sent Carrie word to come and get them. One of our late United States Marshals took her down in a buggy to get them. On the way down he asked her to drive while he lighted his pipe and then he turned to the girl and asked her if she cared if he kissed her. She dropped the lines and he said after that it was the worst working over that he ever got and from a woman when he was only in fun.

I saw much of the early life at my husband's side but the toughest place I ever saw was the Negro Payment at Hayden Store, twenty-five miles north of Chelsea in the Goose-neck Bend. Expecting to be there some time, we had taken a tent. The limestone soil there around the limestone rocks was soft from the spring rains and when we pitched our tent it was the worst place that I have seen. I had a big dog with me and we had our food packed in a barrel. Two neighbor's tents were on one side of me and a medicine tent on the other. Charlie had taken a negro that he had arrested for stealing a horse to Vinita and with the exception of the dog I was alone when one night

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a negro rode up to the tent and opened the tent and stepped in and asked, "Where is Charlie Rider?" Not thinking, I replied that he had gone to Vinita but that he would return soon. Stepping forward, he asked me what we had in the barrel. I backed before him as he entered until I reached the place where a pistol lay which I picked up and, pointing it at him, told him to leave. Once I felt my finger live under the trigger. This is the nearest I ever came to shooting anyone.

At one of the cook tents they had a big iron range and one day the negro cook said to me when there was a shooting going on, "Come and get behind this range, it's where I get out of the way". I stayed two weeks, then I packed up and told Charlie that I was going home. I went and he stayed through the payment.

Two squawmen, Pete and Ed Bird, lived five or five and a half miles southwest of Chelsea at the Cochran Spring, which was a salty spring. It would have little bubbles of oil on the water and the cattle coming to drink

would leave footprints in the ground around the spring and these footprints would fill with the black oil that escaped with the water from the spring. The old Indians had heard that this black oil would cure rheumatism so they would come there and take feathers and skim off the oil and then strip it off the feather into bottles. A man from Pennsylvania heard of the spring and drilled three hundred feet at the spring. They had a stationary engine, fed with logs and set a long way off and connected with belts, this engine ran the pump. They placed a big wooden hogshead under the spout of the pump and with a big auger they made a bun~~hole~~ at the bottom of the hogshead.

I walked on a long plank to the hogshead and I remember that I had on a mother hubbard that was four yards around the bottom and they told me to be careful not to get the black substance on my dress. As I stood there by the side of the container I gathered up my skirt and held it. Soon down below was heard a gurgling noise and out came a pint of the black liquid into the barrel with the salt

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water. This would occur about each four or five minutes. The oil is lighter than the salt water so it would rise to the top and then the bung hole would be opened and let the salt water run out at the bottom. Then they would dip the oil and carry it to other containers placed nearby, this was either fifty-three or fifty-four years ago. Before this either in Flint or Goingsnake district near the old Baptist Mission was an oil spring that I have heard my grandmother speak of.

My husband's uncles, the Marcum brothers, dug the salt wells south of Salina.

In those days neighbors did everything that they could for each other. We had few doctors but our people had their own remedies for our ailments.

When the people began to break up the country the people began to chill and my father told my husband that he had a hog claim over in the hills where there was a spring, the water of which would help cure chills, so we went over there for several months.

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In those days if you marked a hog, usually a sow, she and her descendants belonged to you. We were out of meat when we reached there so Pa and Charlie went out and killed eight head of hogs and Pa killed a deer so we had plenty of meat and jerked venison.

Once in our home, a log cabin, I entertained an English Lord, Lord Stouden and his brother, Earl. I don't think these people had much money in England and they came to this country to make some. They brought a bunch of horses with them. They stayed at the Jack Kendal Ranch. Lord Stouden had a fine dog and guns and they would come to our house and Charlie would take the hack and we would go out and get a lot of prairie chickens. I would shoot with the men. One day it rained and the men got wet. When we returned to our home, I thought that I would give him Charlie's Sunday shirt which was a white one with a white starched front and fastened in the back with three small buttons. The men changed shirts and when they came out to the table Lord Stouden had Charlie's shirt on wrong side in front and had it buttoned down the front and when

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his attention was called to it he replied that it was warmer that way. It was at my log cabin that he ate his first corn bread. Here he sat down to the table on which were vegetables, corn bread and fat meat.

At one time we had a coal mine on the farm where we were living. You rather lay on your shoulder and picked the coal out from under the ledge. I have tried this, too, and have picked out a tub-full at a time.

at one time we had five brothers, the Hiltons, from Texas working for us, all were good musicians and the evenings were happy ones with them playing after they returned to the house and got cleaned up and supper over. In remem-

brance of those days, I wrote a poem and when I learned that they were working at Bushyhead, later, I sent them a copy of it in a letter unsigned. One of the brothers got it and when he read it, he took it down to another brother and read it to him and when he heard it, he said, "That's from mother, she is homesick to see us". Soon after that one night at our home here in Afton after dark from a distance we heard the sound of music which kept coming closer.

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As I recognized the music, I told Charlie that it was my boys and sure enough it was; they had come up by train and remained with us that night between trains.

I have heard some old folklore stories of being turned into animals, I don't know whether or not they are true but this I did see. When Heck Bruner was drowned we lived in Pryor. They did not recover his body for three days and then they had to slide it on a blanket and into a coffin and when they brought the body home, it not being wise to take it into the house, it stood in the wagon in front of the house and while here some fluids from the body ran out and onto the ground. We were passing here later

and our dog ran up to the place and after sniffing it, fell sideways to the ground. After that that dog would never pass that spot but would go to the other side of the street when passing there.

Charlie died here fifteen years ago; during his life we had always worked hard and since then I worked harder that ever to keep from remembering. After my days work I would sew and quilt fine quilts at night, etc. I can still

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go places and spend much time visiting my old friends here but the strain on my eyes is telling on them for something is growing over them and I can not only see from the sides of them and am not able to either see or read, which makes my days very long. My only contact with the news today is the radio.