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Ethel B. Tackitt, Interviewer.
September 13, 1937.

Interview with James Andrew Riley,
Logart, Iowa County, Oklahoma.
Born August 28, 1874, Texas.
Father-Jacob Riley
Mother-Grady Cane.

I was born August 28, 1874, in Hunt County, Texas.

My parents were Texas pioneers. Father, Jacob Riley, was born in Kentucky, but came to Texas and fought with the Confederacy through the Civil War. My mother was of the Texas pioneer family, Cane, and was born in Texas. Mother died when I was little and I do not remember much about her.

In 1887, father moved our family to the Chickasaw Nation and settled twenty-four miles east of the present town of Duncan. A more wonderful country than it was at that time cannot be imagined. The timber had not been cut and the trees grew on every creek; oak, elm, walnut, pecan and many other varieties too numerous to mention, while wild fruits grew in abundance. The streams were full of fish and wild game - squirrel,

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turkey and deer were to be found everywhere, for they had not been driven out or killed by the white settlers. There were many kinds of "varmints" in the woods also, and I, a boy of thirteen, was often cautioned about them as were all children of that time. They as well as grown-ups watched when they were in the woods.

One day another boy about my age and his brother, Bill Riley, who was older than we, were down on a little creek near our home, when the most awful noise I had ever heard came through the bushes. It was a cry I never had heard before and the boy and I made for the trees. The first I came to was a persimmon tree and I climbed to the top in a hurry, expecting every minute for some kind of animal to come after me. However, the animal dashed by followed by a pack of five hounds. It was a deer and it stood in the deep water of the creek and bawled. This was the first time I ever heard the bawl of a deer. My brother,

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Bill, waded out into the water and cut the deer's throat with his knife and brought it to the tank for venison.

The pack of hounds, I heard later, had been chasing it for twenty-four hours. I was as badly frightened as if it had been a panther.

We got a ten year lease from Henry Tussy and our only farming equipment was three yoke of oxen, a turning plow and a double shovel. We cleared the land and put in cotton and corn. Everything grew and there was plenty of wild hogs for meat if we did not want to hunt or fish.

It was my job to take the corn to the mill, which was at Velma, down on a good horse, about ten miles southwest. There was a store, a gristmill fired by wood and a blacksmith shop, John Bob ran the store and he leased the land from a Chickasaw Indian named Suttles.

I rode bareback with the corn in sacks before and behind me. We paid the miller in toll, which was

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part of the corn. I always went barefoot and jogged through the woods, following a trail which we had marked by notching trees along the way. There was no road for we never took a wagon to mill, I could make it more quickly on horseback than the oxen could with the wagon.

Later, Father went down to Bonita in Montague, county Texas, and bought a grist mill and cotton gin which he hauled back with three yoke of steers. It took him two weeks to haul it back. He put it up back of our

farm and put in a store also and called the place Tussy. He owned the place until 1900, when the mill, gin, blacksmith shop and store all burned down. I was back at the place in 1925 and on the spot where these stood there was no sign of buildings, it was all in a cotton patch.

In those days Christmas was a great day to celebrate and turkey shooting was a regular event, which

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took place on Christmas Eve so that the turkeys could be served for Christmas dinner. Great numbers of turkeys were brought in alive and were placed in a box with the head sticking out of a hole in the top. Each man wanting to shoot at them paid ten cents a shot and could shoot as long as he paid. This was great sport as most every man considered himself a fine shot or marksman and many of them would be world champions if now living. This turkey shooting began early in the morning and continued all day. It would have been quick work for the most of the marksmen if it had not been for the fact that there was too much liquor consumed by them. I have seen many a turkey bring three and four dollars at ten cents a shot.

Whiskey was not supposed to be sold in the Territory but it was quite common to see a gallon jug of alcohol poured into the two by three foot water trough filled with water and several plugs of tobacco cut up

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in this mess and then bottled up and sold to anybody who wanted to buy or drink it, and many did. This stuff was often bottled up and taken to dances, where lots of the fellows would get drunk and shoot the lights all out.

Shooting anvils was another Christmas sport. As soon as it was dark all the anvils in the blacksmith shops were brought out into the road and powder by the many pounds shot on them all night long. It was ten miles to Velma and we could hear their anvils shooting and they could hear ours. This was great fun for everybody.

When the Kiowa and Comanche Country opened we moved near Lone Wolf and have lived in that community ever since 1901. I have followed farming for a living and am yet living on a farm twelve miles south of Lone Wolf. I have lived in Oklahoma fifty years and have witnessed the many changes.