

ROACH, AUGUSTIS NAPOLEON.

INTERVIEW

9768

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

ROACH, AUGUSTIS NAPOLEON / INTERVIEW # 9768

Field Worker's name Ide B. Lankford

This report made on (date) January 25 1938

1. Name Augustis Napoleon Roach

2. Post Office Address Cordell, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) West Fourth St.,

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 19 Year 1850

5. Place of birth Claiborne Parish,
Louisiana

6. Name of Father R. . Roach Place of birth Alabama
Farmer

7. Name of Mother Elizabeth Weldor Place of birth Alabama

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 4

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Ida B. Lankford,
Investigator,
January 25, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. Augustis Napoleon Roach,
West Fourth St., Cordell, Oklahoma.

I came from Wilbarger County, Texas, to Washita County and filed on land here in March, 1898; I located one mile west of Dill City. I hauled lumber from Vernon, Texas, to build a house in 1899. Before building the house I lived in a dugout covered with brush, poles, and dirt.

The first year we were here we burned sunflowers and old dry cow chips to keep warm. All we had to eat until we made a crop was clabber milk cheese and corn bread. I called it landscape view and wind pudding.

In 1899 we men went together and built a school; two years later, a cyclone came and blew it away; three people were killed during the storm.

I hauled my wire and posts from Vernon, Texas. When I got my land fenced, I put in an orchard; after a few years time I had a fine orchard which supplied us with all our fruit and some for the neighbors. I secured the place where Dill City now stands. I had to forfeit three thousand

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dollars for the place but I was glad I did it. Fuel was very scarce, but the Indians had plenty on their land, so we went to the Kiowas and got our wood; some folks thought we were stealing from the Indians, but we didn't think so. Sometimes we would be gone four days to get one load of wood.

Once six men went to get wood from the Indian land. One of the men, Mr. Brown, saw that the Indians were going to get him so he lay down and stretched out. The Indians rode up and said, "Heap dead, long dead. Maybe so he is swelled up". Mr. Brown weighed three hundred pounds, so they thought him dead and rode on. He got up and took his wood on home.

In the summer of 1901, I drove my team sixteen hundred miles selling sweet potatoes and getting my groceries for the next year.

I remember well when I came to file on my land. I asked a man to go to Cloud Chief with me as that was the county seat then. He said, "Well I am sort of a preacher and I just can't go, as I hear you are an infidel and a Socialist".

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I said to him, "I am a church member, no infidel, but I am a Socialist", and the preacher decided to go with me.

The first real crop I made to make good money on was sweet potatoes and turnips. I hauled them to Vernon, Texas, and El Reno.

Part of the hard times I experienced on those trips to Vernon were: I got stuck in the Red River and had to unload my groceries and carry them across, then take my wagon apart and carry it piece by piece across. It was real cold weather and I had to wade the water, so I got all wet. After putting the wagon back together I started out again. When it was time to make camp, my clothes were almost dry, but I was really cold. Another time while I was coming from Vernon with a load of lumber a hard blizzard came. I had to walk behind the wagon and drive the mules to keep from freezing to death.

A man from the north came with a large herd of cattle. The Indians decided to take some of the cattle; there was a real battle; several were killed, both whites and Indians.

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After the summer crops were laid by I would get out and build houses for people as I was a carpenter; that was when we were doing away with the dirt days.

The quails at that time were numerous and were almost as gentle as chickens are now; we would have quails and prairie chickens most of the time to eat.

The cattlemen made it awfully hard on the early settlers here, as the people were not able to fence their land and when a herd of longhorned cattle came through they would eat up the crops. Lots of times the cattle would eat a man's crop out in one night.

The big prairie fires would break out. In 1894, a big fire broke out on Oak Creek where three families were camped. The fire burned their camps and three of the people were burned to death.