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

ARMSTRONG, BILL.

INTERVIEW.

8059. ⁷³

Field Worker's name Maude M. Fink.

This report made on (date) July 19, 1937. 1937

1. Name Bill Armstrong.

2. Post Office Address Clinton, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 308 Dunn.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 10 Year 1874.

5. Place of birth Illinois.

6. Name of Father Milton Armstrong. Place of birth Mississippi.

Other information about father farmer.

7. Name of Mother Murza Hayes. Place of birth Cleveland, Ohio.

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 3.

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Maude M. Fink,
Field Worker,
July 19, 1937.

An Interview With Bill Armstrong,
Clinton, Oklahoma.

Mr. Armstrong came to this country in 1898 from Willow Springs, Missouri. He came to Oklahoma City for two months then came on out to a place nine miles southwest of Clinton and bought an allotment from a negro.

He made the trip in wagons with houses built in them with seven yoke of oxen to a wagon. He stopped at Tahlequah for a month and worked in the sawmill for Bill and Jess Wright who owned the mills.

When Mr. Armstrong came to this country there was just one house at Arapaho, and in it was a post office and a little store. The people lived in tents and dugouts. There was a hardware store in a tent there.

There was an Indian fight at Quartermaster and a man named Walter Breeding was killed. An Indian stole his horse and wanted a reward for returning it. Bud Breeding was not going to pay it, so he untied the horse and started to lead him away. The Indians began shooting at Mr. Breeding and he turned and shot back at them to scare them, and the Indians

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shot and killed him. Mr. Carter was with breeding and he was shot through the shoulder. They sent an Indian runner "Roman Nose" to Fort Reno after the soldiers and all the white people rushed to Arapaho and stayed together in dugouts and had men on the watch all night. The Indians prepared for war, they had trenches and breast shields made but the soldiers came and settled the racket. The soldiers camped at Arapaho for three months. These were the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians.

Mr. M. Z. Armstrong, father of Mr. W. L. Armstrong, ran the first hotel in Arapaho.

The cattlemen tried to run the homestead people out. "Nesters" they called themselves. The cattlemen told the "Nesters" they would burn them out and tried to bluff them in several ways. The cattlemen thought that they owned the whole country.

There were no houses then and people lived in dugouts. The only way you could tell when you came onto a dugout, was by the smoke coming out of the ground. The dugouts were even with the ground. They were mostly just one room but some had two and three rooms. There were a few sod houses.

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Kaffir corn and maize were the first early crops. people would go to El Heno and Minco to do their trading and freighting. It would take six days to make the trip, and some times when the river was up it would take longer, as the people would have to wait until the river ran down. When it was dangerous to drive into the river. Sometimes they even had to haul their feed for the stock from El Heno.

People did not have very much furniture in those days. They had poles set up for bedsteads. Some had feather mattresses and some used straw ticks. Some of the

people cooked on stoves and some had fireplaces and used Dutch ovens. They would heat the lid, then after it was put on the Dutch oven they would put coals on it. They made good biscuit and fried chicken better than if it was fried in a skillet.

There were no schools and churches for quite a while, as the country was too thinly settled for schools.

For amusements people would visit among themselves and several of the neighbors would get together and take their dinners and go on the river and fish and have a picnic. People would also visit the Indian camps.