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Field Worker: Jennie Selfridge
March 25, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF: Mr. William Henry Baker
Box 143, Ringling, Okla.

BORN: September 16, 1862 at
Dardnell, Arkansas

PARENTS: Elisha C. Baker, Virginia
(Made the run to California
in 1849 with parents)
Elizabeth Dunford, Alabama

I was born at Dardnell, Arkansas, September 16, 1862. In 1863 my parents moved to Cook county, Texas. My father fought with the Confederacy during the war, and was a close friend of Captain H. E. Morris, who later operated a large ranch in the Indian Territory.


In 1869 my father drove cattle up the trail by Rock Bluff ferry, south of the present town of Aylesworth and on a cross the Indian Territory into Kansas, via, the present town of Shawnee. I also drove cattle over part of this trail in 1883. I was working for Captain H. E. Morris at the time and wanted to take the cattle (there were five thousand, five hundred head of them) up the Chisholm Trail but he insisted that we follow the lower trail, so we went a cross and crossed the Washita River near Pauls Valley, then on over by old Johnsonville, which was a small town located about one mile east of old Camp Arbuckle. From this point we turned due north and crossed the South Canadian north of Byars. We came into the cattle trail north of Shawnee. That was one of the most difficult drives I was ever on. We had so much of the drive through timber land.

On April 10, 1879, I crossed the Red River from ²⁰⁴Texas and began work on the Cross A. Ranch for C. J. Graham. His ranch was up Red Creek, and the nearest town was Red River Station on the Texas side.

The Chisholm Trail entered Indian Territory just north of Red River Station. The trail crosses Highway 70 about four miles east of Waurika, or a better description would be: after crossing south Mud Creek on Highway 70, go about one mile west and one can plainly see the marks of the old trail on both the north and south side of the road. Three miles north of where this trail crosses the Highway is the noted Monument Hill.

On top of Monument Hill is a rock monument built there by John Chisholm. Most of the rock is still at the same location. From this point one can see north to Wild Horse timber; west across Beaver Creek into the Comanche country; in fact, clear over to where Hastings is now located; to the south Red River is plainly visible. This trail also crosses Highway 81 east of Minco. It makes a turn to the left about one mile from Minco; then north across the west edge of Chickasha; then north to the North Canadian; passing just east of Fort Reno, then a due north course into Baxter Springs and Honeywell, Kansas. This trail was one continual trail; no by-roads or trails leading from it.

After reaching the Kansas border we would sometimes let the cattle graze for several days before shipping them out. This was in the late seventies or early eighties.



We shipped one year from Wichita, Kansas, then later 295
began shipping from Caldwell, Kansas. Caldwell was a
very wild place in those days. Nothing but saloons and
dance halls. Talk about Oklahoma oil-towns--they were
very quiet places compared to the cattle towns of Kansas!

I cut the trail in 1879 and 1880, and used the Monu-
ment Hills for a lookout station. I could ride up on top
of this hill every morning and look toward Red River and
see any herds that might be coming up the trail from Texas,
and then I would look north for twenty or thirty miles.
We had to keep a close watch in those days in order to
keep our cattle from mixing in with the other trail herds.
I was working for Captian Morris at this time. Their
ranch was known far and wide as the IB Ranch. It was
founded by Bill and John Boone in an early day and loca-
ted between Red River and Mud Creek. Nearly all of the
travelers who went down the Chisholm Trail spent at least
one night at the IB Ranch. Jesse James stopped there on
more than one occasion.

We never asked people questions in those days, there-
fore it would be impossible to estimate just how many out-
laws visited at the ranch. One summer I was up in the
Wichita mountains rounding up some cattle for the T-Fork
Cattle Company. I became suddenly ill with a high fever,
and went to the home of Allen Parmer. His wife was a sis-
ter to the James boys. Mrs. Parmer doctored me and in a
day or two I was able to get out on the porch. Mrs. Parmer
came out and began asking me questions about where I work-

ed, and asked if I remembered a certain man who spent the night at the ranch a month or two before. I remembered the occasion of his visit, and she told me that our visitor was none other than Jesse James. He had spent the winter at her home. Jesse James was a very nice fellow in his way.

Jones Leonard and I cut the Lee Brothers' herd of cattle about three days before they killed the Hoff brothers. They lived off the road a little ways from where the Madill Highway now runs east of Ardmore. When we rode up to them all of the Lees were well armed, and we were too. At first they objected to our going through their herd, but after we talked awhile they gave their consent. We rode through the herd and cut out forty head of our cattle. After they killed the Hoff boys they made a break for Red River, but two of them were killed a day or two later by Heck Thomas, United States Marshal.

When I first came to the Territory there were only three crossings on Mud Creek. The first one was southeast of Orr, and the old Rock Crossing southwest of Orr. The third crossing was south of Atlee.

Atlee was first known as "Butcher Knife". The place got its name because it was settled by Frank Tucker, who always went around carrying a large butcher knife in his belt and he was known as "Butcher Knife Tucker". The second settler at this location was the old lady Joines; the mother of Sherman Joines.

In 1886 I moved to the Three Stripe Ranch which was

south west of the present town of Loco on Willow Creek.

Cal and Iker Sugges, operated the Four H Triangle Ranch in the Comanche country; their brand was like this:



Columbus Addington operated a ranch on Bayou Creek near Eastman, Old man Preston Addington operated a ranch northwest of Monument Hill, and ran the "Pig-Pen" brand. Zack Addington was on Mud Creek and ran the Three I brand. He later went into partnership with the Washingtons. Mat Wolfe had a ranch near Davis, and Foreman had one north of Sulphur.

I married in 1889, and settled near Grady, Oklahoma on Byrd Baker Creek. I farmed and ranched there until 1930 I owned one thousand acres of farm and grass land, and controlled about four sections. My home place is still standing. It was built in 1907. I gave the place to my oldest daughter after my baby girl died in 1930.

THE END