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BAILEY, LON.

INTERVIEW

9807

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

**BAILEY, LON.**

**INTERVIEW.**

**9607.**

Field Worker's name Mrs. Bessie L. Thomas.

This report made on (date) December 30, 1937.

1. Name Mr. Lon Bailey.

2. Post Office Address Lawton, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 125 "G" Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

5. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

6a. Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Beessie L. Thomas,  
Investigator,  
Dec. 20, 1937.

An Interview With Lon Bailey,  
Lawton, Oklahoma.

Mr. Bailey's early life was spent at Rush Springs. He lived on a farm near Rush Springs, and received a little education at the country school, which was first carried on in a tent, and only from four or five months to a term. Some of the teachers in these days did not know much more than some of the pupils. With the improving of the country, school was held in a log house. A pupil in those days felt lucky to be able to be taught the three R's.

Lon Bailey as he grew up was large for his age and at sixteen, was given the contract for carrying the mail from Rush Springs to Fort Sill. The mail was carried in a prairie schooner and sometimes \$4,000.00 or \$5,000.00 would be carried at one time. The soldiers at the fort received their pay once a month. Mr. Bailey's father accompanied him on the day the money was carried. The boy drove and his father sat beside him on the spring

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seat, with a Winchester, ready any minute to go into action if the Indians arrived on the scene and tried to stop them.

Several times Indians were seen on these trips, but only one time in his four years of carrying mail did Lon Bailey and his father become alarmed. One day they had trouble with a sick horse, and had to stop several times to doctor it before they reached the place where Apache now stands, and where they always changed teams. They finally reached there several hours late, changed horses and started out again; by this time night had fallen, and they discussed whether to take along another man or two for protection, feeling sure they would be waylaid by the Indians. They had not gone very far when one of the mules nearly jumped out of the harness. The lead mules, or horses were always the best, and strongest. When this horse jumped it naturally frightened the others, and they had a time getting them quiet and when they finally got them stopped, the horses just stood and snorted, and trembled. Mr. Bailey told his son to stay in the wagon, and he would get out, take the lantern and see what was

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frightening the horses, and if anything happened to him, for Lon to put the whip to the horses and get through with the mail and money, at all costs.

The father with the lantern in one hand and his Winchester in the other went forward to see what was wrong, expecting any minute to be pounced upon by Indians but instead, found a pile of iron laid across the road, or trail, which had been put there they supposed by someone who had intended to hold up and rob the coach of mail and money.

Mr. Lon Bailey quit the mail carrying contract to get married and moved with his new bride to live for thirty-eight years just outside of Fort 311 where they ran a general store, selling mostly to the Indians. Bills were paid by the Government once a month. Some white men would make out enormous bills and present them to the Government for collection when maybe the real account was very small.

The principal menu of the Indians in the early days was beef and bread; the bread was baked in big pones. Sergeant Grabb issued beef to them once a week on every

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Friday when the Indians would come for miles around to get their portion. Ten pounds of meat were issued to each family. The Indians at first would tear the meat off and eat it raw, but were taught differently by the white man, and soon got to cooking it.

When an Indian died an early custom was to carry the body on a horse to the top of a rocky hill, shove it under a rock, or into a crevice and pile more rocks on top of it, bury all personal belongings with the body and kill all horses or other livestock that had belonged to the dead person. Later they would wrap the body in a sheet, throw it and the dead horse and all personal belongings to the dead person in the same hole. When Fort Sill was first established twelve soldiers were kept there, to guard the white settlers, their interests and the fort.

Mr. Cassaway and a Miss Hall, were the first two missionaries sent to the fort and church was held at the issue pens and sometimes the meetings were broken up by the Indians who became angry and then the soldiers were called out. One night the young Indians were having

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a dance and the missionaries tried to stop them, but they kept on dancing, and Mr. Cassaway and Miss Hall stood in the doors singing and praying. The prayers and singing mingled with the chants of the Indians, and beating of tom-toms, was very exciting, but the night ended without any trouble.

Mr. Bailey received the contract to carry Indian boys and girls to and from Rush Springs where they would take the train for the Carlisle Indian school. The roads in those days were not much more than trails, and in bad rainy weather became just two deep ruts. When Mr. Bailey was gone on these trips Mrs. Bailey was left to take care of their store. Many a night she sat up all night to watch and keep vigil over her small children. The wolves would come up and sniff, and howl around the door, and one night when there was beef in the store they actually scratched on the door and around the outside of the house trying to get to the meat. The Indian Py-Koty family were near neighbors to Mr. and Mrs. Bailey, and were good friends. Mrs. Bailey's mother made a cake and gave it to the small child of Py-Koty's



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on its sixth birthday. A piece of canvas was spread on the ground, the cake placed in the center with beef and bread around it and then began a ceremony of worship over the cake. The Indians would pat and kiss the cake, dancing around and around and this was kept up for an hour or more. A piece of cake was given to Mrs. Bailey's mother, also some beef.

The old Indian squaws did all the hard work around the tepees and gathered food for winter, dried corn, pumpkin, berries, beef, and tanned buckskin for their clothes and moccasins, did all the bead work and other work, while the bucks went out and hunted buffalo, and other wild game. They would move their camps from place to place, sometimes fight among themselves or with other tribes, go on scalping expeditions, and sometimes steal white children, but today most tribes of Indians are civilized.