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BILLARD, HENRY

INTERVIEW

#12168

340

LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

BALLARD, HENRY

INTERVIEW

12166

Field worker's name Nannie Lee Burns

This report made on (date) November 18 1937

1. This legend was secured from (name) Mrs. and Mrs. Henry Ballard

Address Afton, Okla.

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe Cherokees

2. Origin and history of legend or story

From memory and told by their parents.

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached

Nannie Lee Burns
Investigator
November 18, 1937

Interview with
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ballard
Afton, Oklahoma.

MR. BALLARD

My mother was Sarah Arthur, born in Georgia,
the daughter of Sabina Ward Arthur.

My father was Jack Ballard also born in Georgia who came when a young man with his people to their new home in the Indian Country. They came in covered wagons. Our people and their friends settled near Mayesville and here my parents grew up and later married.

The early home was a double log house built without nails. It was built with a tongue and grooves.

At the close of the Civil War Mother and her family who had taken refuge in Arkansas returned to our old home two miles west of Mayesville, found that it had been burned and that she and her children were without a place to go but to a friend by the name of Tinnen, who let us stay in a part of his home where we stayed until our friends, relatives and neighbors returned and

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we knew of Father's death and afterwards these friends built us a small log house. This was on the line north of Mayesville. Mother continued to live here until her death in 1917. She was then eighty-six years old.

BOYHOOD DAYS

One crop-eared pony was the only animal that we had left after the war. My older brothers had to help in the fields and as we did not have any farm implements left much of our work had to be done by hand and with the hoe and there was not much school for the older brothers, just a few weeks in winter when we had to walk to school starting early and getting home when it was dark. We had a log schoolhouse and no comfortable seats with backs around a nice hot stove. We had a fireplace which the boys helped supply with wood. Because I was younger, I got more schooling.

THE BAND

When I was twelve or fourteen, an old teacher

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came along, McCandles, I think his name was, and started a band. Later, an old teacher from Cincinnati, Arkansas, came for a night's lesson once every two or three weeks. We paid this teacher \$10.00 a lesson.

Siloam Springs was then called Hico.

We called our band the "Mayesville Band" and the next summer we had a band wagon and went to Fort Gibson and to Neosho, Missouri, and played four days at a place for gatherings.

When small I began to work in stores as a helper and later as a clerk getting my school days in between times. I have never owned a store but liked best to work for others. I worked for Hugh Tinnen in Mayesville first. I was working for W. C. Patten in Vinita when I met my wife.

MRS. BALLARD

My mother was Ann Parks nee Thompson and she was born in Georgia. She came with her parents to the Indian Country when she was five years old. My father was Jeff Parks, born in Tennessee, who

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came when a young man to the Indian Country.

His parents did not come here.

ON THE ROAD

My grandparents were not a part of the "Trail of Tears" but were a part of a group of friends and neighbors who brought their families through in covered wagons. There were forty wagons in this company. As all were friends and neighbors the children were allowed to ride in different wagons and the older people would check up on the children each day and always before crossing a stream.

One day in the confusion of getting started my grandmother who had wandered away gathering pieces of pretty bark was overlooked and left behind. She did not notice that the wagons were leaving and when she returned they were gone. She was very much frightened and started the way she thought they had gone. She was not missed until

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the noontime and after a search that revealed she had not been with them that morning my grandfather started back to try to find her and found her coming over the trail that they had traveled that morning, frightened and crying. From that day none of the children were allowed to ride in the wagons of the others but were compelled to ride with their parents.

THE NEW HOME

My mother's parents settled three miles from Mayesville and built a log house. There were three rooms in a row with an upstairs over these rooms, one side was a kitchen and two bedrooms and on the other side was a gallery. This house had six fireplaces. I well remember the big logs that they used to roll into these fireplaces and the heat that they threw out. This house was not burned during the war but later it was weatherboarded and painted. It has always remained in the family and now my cousin, Turner Edmondson, lives on the place.

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He has torn down the old house and now has a modern home on the same location. The old smoke-house and some of the log cribs are still standing.

Grandfather was among the first of the emigrants to build log barns and he stored lots of corn and grain in these. In the shoveling of the grain some of it would shatter off and get in the cracks between the logs. The Full-Bloods would come and with feathers would work this grain out and take it with them both to plant and also as part of the food for their families. Grandfather had much stock around him and was very generous and fed many persons.

Grandfather was friendly and took much pains with his family and tried to rear them and surround them with the comforts they had been accustomed to having. When his daughters went places they had a chaperons. Callers were expected to leave at nine o'clock each evening.

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They were not allowed to visit on Sundays but went to church with the family.

Their own cotton and wool was raised and much of their time was taken up in the spinning of the flax and the weaving of the fine linens, the carding of the wool and the coloring and weaving into cloth for use for clothes as well as for blankets. The daughters were fine seamstresses and could sew and embroider beautifully.

MY PARENT'S MARRIAGE

My parents were married near Mayesville before the War.

For some time, father had a store in the corner of Grandfather's yard and they continued to live here at Grandfather's house.

At my brother J. A. Park's birthday last summer, he preached a sermon at Jay, on "Memories of Seventy Years." Three of us attended this service; one of our sisters came from California.

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WAR DAYS

Our women folks went south during the War and lived at Broomfield, Texas, on the Red River. Father was the Captain of his company and could only slip home occasionally to see his family. My parents' home, which at the beginning of the War was ten miles from Grove on the edge of Cow-skin Prairie, had been burned and only the smoke house was left.

After the War, when our people returned, my mother brought back our cattle and my parents settled at Fort Gibson and started again by selling milk, butter and cheese to the soldiers at the Fort. My mother made the butter and cheese. They stayed there until they got a start again and then they returned to their old home on the Cow-skin Prairie near Cave Springs and here father built another house. This time he built a two story log house with a shed room and porch. We always had some one staying with us and we had

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double decked beds.

Old Man Boyd went south with the folks and came back with them. Also a young Creek Indian, Joshawa Brewer, came back with us and remained for some years before returning to his people. There were some large rocks between the house and the spring and on one of these he cut his name and for many years as we went to the spring for water we would see his name.

GIRLHOOD DAYS

Here at my parents' home near Cave Springs I spent my early days helping with the chores, when small, and walking two and a half miles to school which was taught in an old abandoned farm house. We studied reading, writing and arithmetic. Father paid fifty cents per month apiece for us. We also attended school at Greenwood, Missouri, in a hewed log building which had puncheon seats. Later I was sent to the Seminary

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at Tahlequah and attended there one year when my mother was taken sick so I did not return to school.

I never learned to spin but I could card and my older sisters and Mother did the spinning and weaving but we raised our own flax for the linen, cotton for the bats and cotton cloth and sheep which furnished the wool for our clothing, stockings, gloves and blankets.

Mother was a beautiful seamstress. Her seams when backstitched were as even as those of a sewing machine and she did beautiful embroidery.

The winter days were spent indoors sewing, spinning and weaving.

The long summer days were devoted to the raising of the crops, the garden and the things to be stored for the winter. We had flowers of course, the old-fashioned ones. We carefully saved our own seeds and would sometimes exchange seeds with a neighbor.

On Sunday we had to stay at home, except

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when we went with our parents to church. The neighbors would have quiltings and gatherings, log-raisings and maybe apple-peelings.

We made kraut by the barrel, pickles by the keg, peach-pickles and preserves by the ten and twelve gallon stone jars. We would cook our preserves all day and to seal them would put a cloth over them and make a paste of flour, the white of an egg and water which paste was used to fasten securely a heavy brown paper over the top of the jar. This covered and protected the cloth.

When I was fifteen years old my mother died and six months later my father died and I went to live with a married sister in Vinita, and here I met my husband who was then clerking for W. C. Patten. We were married with a church wedding on Christmas night, 1889.

My husband was a member of the band there at that time and the band serenaded us.

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Mr. Ballard obtained another position as clerk at Choteau so we went there to live but later returned to Vinita and finally in 1908 we moved to Afton to be near our farm.