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BOURLAND, .LICE.

INTERVIEW

9957

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

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Field Worker's name Zaidee B. BlandThis report made on (date) February 14 and 15 19381. Name Mrs. Alice Bourland2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma Route # 13. Residence address (or location) 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of Altus.4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 1 Year 18925. Place of birth De Moines, Iowa6. Name of Father John H. Brinkman Place of birth Germany

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

7. Name of Mother Elsa Strong Place of birth Switzerland

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 9.

The old homestead is still owned by the children and is Section 8 and 9 Township 1 south and 20 west Indian M.

Only the south east quarter of Section 8 and the south west quarter of Section 9 is still owned by the heirs.

Zaidee B. Bland

Journalist

February 14 and 15, 1938

An interview with Alice Bourland  
Altus, Oklahoma.

My father and mother thought they could not live without owning their own land and wanted every boy they had to own land. Land was so very dear to them that, naturally, when the news spread of land in north Texas that could be had for the taking my parents were interested. Father came out in 1888 prospecting and really talked out a claim and filed on the land for a homestead. You could claim a whole section at that time. Some way father could not get the family ready to make such a long move. He came down about once a year but at last everything was sold but what could be carried in the wagon. The wagon was fixed for camping out; food, bedding and such treasures as could be stacked in including a home-made basket for me, then a tiny baby. It was the winter of the year and snow, ice and sleet were encountered. There were no good roads; we got down often; the deep frozen ruts caused the wagon to overturn completely once. I had several older brothers and sisters. When they all

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scrambled out and we began to count noses to see if they were all there; the baby (that was I) was missing. Then began a wild scramble to right the wagon and look under everything for me. I was found right under the wagon bed with my sturdy basket completely over me shielding me from any hurt. No one was hurt seriously but shaken up and frightened. Pa thought that we should I should be put on a train and sent on ahead but there was no chance of a train getting very near here. His claim, as so we were allowed to proceed with the family. Of course, I cannot remember the journey. I can only imagine how it was from the things I have been told. Coming so far from the north we were literally strangers in a strange land. Pa did not know one thing about dry farming. He did utilize the room box house.

While Pa was building this house some of the folks slept under a tent but Ma and I slept in a dug-out with our nearest neighbors. Now, neither Pa nor Ma had ever seen or heard of snuff dippers. This woman dipped snuff on a stick. Ma and Pa watched her and after they had gone to bed Ma and Pa had an argument about it. Ma said, "John, do you

know that women puts that black nasty tuff into her mouth". Pa said, "O, no, You are mistaken. She has catarrh or something and puts that brown medicine into her nose. They could not see, so the next morning Pa asked the woman. Imagine their surpris when the woman said that was snuff and that the pleasure of dipping it was the greatest pleasure she had in this "God forsaken country"- so, she could in no wise do without her snuff.

Pa said when he finished his two room box house he had one thin dime left. because he had built his family a house to live in to start with he was accounted wealthy. He said men came from far and near to borrow a little money and would not believe that he told the truth when he said he had used every dime he had on his house.

On Pa's trips down before he came he had gathered together a little herd of cattle. His was blooded cattle and he wanted a good market before selling. Too, a blooded cow cannot live on dry grass like the native cattle. He was offered a good price but not good enough, he thought. Dry years set in. He was offered all the improvements on claim after claim for cows, still he could not trade. The grass

burned up. Pa heard about good grass away east in Chickasaw Nation. He and my brothers drove the cattle over and secured an Indian lease for about 100 head. In less than two weeks the cattle were literally alive with ticks. This caused them to develop a fever. They began to die. Pa got a dip and began to dip them for the ticks. I guess he used too strong a dip. Anyway between the ticks, fever and dipping the cows Pa lost his last cow. He and brother came home very much poorer but wiser men.

There were five years of this drouth. People left by the hundreds. If you offered to work for a man for a meal or fifteen cents it did no good for there was absolutely no money. Pa bought all the improvements on a quarter section of land for two dozen eggs and two dollars in cash. He lived six (6) months on five dollars. Pa took Ma in the wagon and drove to Vernon to see if they could get work. Ma at last got work with a Chinaman in a laundry. Sam Lee was the Chinaman's name. I do not know what he paid Ma but I know that Ma and the children came back home and we lived on what Ma would send us for months. We had been quality folks before this because we lived in a house above the ground but now people looked

down on us because ma worked for a Chinaman. Lots of folks said they would starve before they would work for a Chinaman. Some way we got through.

Pa put out an orchard; peaches, pears, grapes, apples. There are some of those old apple trees living yet. We still own the old home place. Pa would go to town, that would be to Vernon, once every six months. He would bring us all a stick of candy apiece. In spite of all these hard times we were well and happy. By the time I was eight years old I was put on a horse to herd the cattle away from the river for fear they would get into the quicksand. I have spent all day long on my pony weaving in and out among those old sand dunes looking after these cattle. I was afraid of only one thing, getting stuck in the quicksand when I would run my horse in between some cow and a place that looked dangerous.

Not ever never thought of making cornbread or biscuit during those lean years. There might be a little waste. I do not know how Pa managed it but there was always hog meat. For breakfast we had light bread and gravy, for dinner hog meat and bread. Of course, if any kind of



vegetable could be gotten hold of, it was cooked for dinner. For supper we had bread and milk and we could have sugar on our bread at night if we were lucky.

We thought it the grandest thing in the world to get to go fishing and stay all night. Pa did not like to go much but Ma would take us. I remember once Pa stayed home and tended things and Ma took us all over to Otter Creek to spend the night and fish. The mosquitoes were so bad that no one could fish and Ma stayed up all night to try and keep the mosquitoes from biting us smaller children. In the morning the mosquitoes had stung me so much my eyes were swollen shut and we all went home without fish.

We had two good stoves, one heater and one cook stove, but Pa had to go to the nation for every bit of the wood we had to burn and it was dangerous to go so we would hitch up the horses to the wagon and go over the prairie and pick up cow chips for fuel. I have helped bring in a lot of cow chips. They make a good fire and cook good but burn up almost like hay.

The girls got on our horses and went where we pleased or hitched the horses to the wagon and went; we were never afraid

of anything but the river and quicksand.

Pa was getting a cow out of the quicksand once and took the cramps and we had to carry him home. The doctor was sent for and came and gave Pa calomel and salivated him and he was sick a long time. We never did believe he got over it; it finally caused his death.

Those dry years Pa and Ma would take the wagon and pull up the cotton stalks and bring them to the house and we children would have to crack those little nubby bolls and get the cotton out. Pa would haul seed and all to Vernon to have it ginned and then take five cents for the cotton.

There was one great blessing, we had a well of good water away down in the corner of the field. This was a treasure for very few times could good water be found. The well has caved in and we have hunted for the old stream in vain. All the water we have now is gyp just like our neighbors.

Ma always made all our soap. We had meat and lard at home always and managed to have sugar. We did not go strong on coffee. I think Ma and Pa usually had

it once a day, but we children never drank it. Never thought about wanting it. We simply thought coffee was something for grown people and not children .

We never thought much about school. If it kept some of us went, but it did not matter much. Some one had always to be herding the cows. There was no use to raise more chickens or turkeys than we needed at home for there was no market for them. We did not have the feed any way.

There was no "pick and choice" what you would do in those days , you did what Pa and Ma said do. I do not remember that we were ever taken to town. That was out of the question. We did not run around hunting school or church, they had to come to us. We had a job to do make a home in a new country. It was so very dry that the trees would die, the crop would blow away and we surely made very slow progress. Things had to be tended any way so some one was always on the job.

There was a post office and school at Locke that we adoped at last as the place to go to occasionally. That is where we went to Sunday school after it was

organized but we usually walked. The horses needed the rest on Sunday you see for they got mighty little chance to eat unless they had a day of rest to run on the grass.