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

Field Worker's name EUNICE M. MAYER

This report made on (date) April 16 1937

1. Name Capt. G. W. Boyd or George Washington Boyd

2. Post Office Address 401 Maryland

3. Residence address (or location) Mangum, Oklahoma

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 18 Year 1859

5. Place of birth Coryell, Texas

6. Name of Father Wesley Boyd Place of birth Alabama

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

7. Name of Mother Elizageth Bertroug Place of birth Alabama

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 14.

Probably the first white man now living to set foot upon the soil of Greer county is George W. Boyd, of Mangun.

George Boyd first came into Greer county in 1877 as a young cowboy helping drive a large herd of cattle from Fort Griffin, Texas, to Dodge City, Kansas. He did not tarry long in Greer county at that time--only long enough for the herd to cross the county. The herd was known as the "S and A" outfit owned by Smith and Adams.

There were no roads and no improved crossings of the rivers. Mr. Boyd believes the herd crossed Greer county further west than any herd had been living for that time. The Dodge City Trail from Doan 's Crossing up North Fork river by Granite, Elk City, Woodward and so on, was not used by the trail drivers when they took the S. and A. Cattle to Dodge City.

Mr. Boyd does not remember the landmarks he saw on that first trip, except that he remembers the spot where the drivers camped on Wanders Creek which flows into Red River just north of Chillicothe, and the crossing of North Fork at the mouth of Starvation Creek, about six miles west

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of the present site of Sayre.

At the mouth of Starvation creek the drivers found a military road, running from Cantonment. (near Mobeetie) to Fort. Sill. Other than the military road, the only signs of human life they saw were a few wagon tracks and old camps of buffalo hunters.

Almost unsurmountable obstacles were encountered.

All of the streams were up and it rained constantly. It would take as long as three or four days to get the stock chuck wagon, and horses across the streams. When some streams were crossed it was necessary to unload the chuck wagon and get the supplies across in small quantities, then disassemble the wagon and take it across in parts. The cattle and horses became lame and progress was slow. Finally the food supply became exhausted except coffee and salt. Of course there was plenty of beef available by butchering from the herd, and the drivers lived on beef and coffee for eight days.

The cowboys did not know their location, since they had no description of the country and its landmarks to follow.

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They knew they were headed north and that is all they did know.

They did not see a white man from the time they crossed the Brazos river until they reached Big Turkey Creek, west of the present town of Sayre. There they saw some wagons. When Mr. Boyd sighted the wagons he caught a fresh horse and rode to the wagons. He learned that they were about fifty miles below a buffalo hunter's camp on Sweetwater, at the present location of the town of Mobeetie. Bob Smith, boss of the drive, dispatched a courier to the buffalo hunter's camp, to which his brother, John Smith, had gone a few days before to await the herd, to get supplies. A couple of days later a wagon arrived with supplies and the cowboys, who had been living for eight days only on beef and coffee, ate an abundance of substantial food.

Upon arrival at Dodge City, Smith and Adams sold their herd and equipment and the cowboys separated and returned southward in search of new jobs. Mr. Boyd drifted south until he reached Camp Supply, later Fort Supply,

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where he got a job. He worked back south for two years finally reaching South Canadian River, where he remained for several years. Each year thereafter he would work down into Greer county and since that time he has been familiar with Greer county and either a resident of the County or a frequent visitor to it.

He saw the advent of the cattleman into Greer county as well as the passing of the large herds as settlers began coming. He saw the tall grasses give way to fields of grain and cotton. He saw the first houses built, the first towns started, and was here when every other person now living here first came.

The first herds to be pastured upon the luxuriant grasses of Greer county were brought from Clay and Archer counties, Texas, in 1881 or 1882. They were "Cap" Ikard's "V Bar" Cattle and the "Bar X" cattle owned by Eph. Harrold, "Doc" Harrold, and Elum Harrold.

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The "V Bar" and "Bar X" cattle ranged between the South Fork of Red river and North Fork of Red river, from the intersection of the two rivers as a southeast point to a string of line camps extending from the mouth of Deep Creek due south to the South Fork.

The line camp on North Fork was located at the mouth of Deep Creek, just below the present site of Sayre. The next camp was located at Jester cave, the next below Jaybuckle Springs at the site of the present farm of J.L. Gilliland, the next on Salt Fork, the next on Turkey Creek, the next on Sandy Creek, and the last on Red River.

Another string of camps was located near the banks of North Fork. One was near the mouth of Boggy Creek; the next at Comanche Springs, just above the present site of Granite; the next just east of the present town of Granite, where the "V Bar" headquarters were located; the next at the old Dodge City Trail crossing about four miles north of the present site of the town of Warren; the next northeast of the old town of Navajoe and the mouth of North Fork, and the last three or four miles above the mouth of North Fork.



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The "V Bar" and "Bar X" herds comprised a total of about 30,000 head of cattle. The Harrolds and Ikard were partners but ran two separate brands.

"Cap" Ikard and the Harrold brothers sold out in 1884 to the Francklyn Land and Cattle company, an English syndicate, one of the largest cattle companies ever to operate in this country.

"Cap" Ikard returned to Texas. "Dock" and "Elum" Harrold returned to their former home somewhere in the East. Eph Harrold organized the first National Bank and was its principal operating officer for many years.

Mr. Boyd recalls that Eph Harrold was a true friend -- to the early cattleman of old Greer county. For many years when a cattleman or cowboy would go to Fort Worth from Greer county and after a few days of "seeing the sights" become "broke", he would go to Eph Harrold with a request for "enough money to get home"--and the request would never be denied.

The Francklyn Land and Cattle company kept the "V Bar" and "Bar X" cattle on the Greer county range only about a year, moving them in 1885 and 1886 to Texas

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Panhandle, northeast of Amarillo, establishing a great ranch on the land now occupied by Borger, Pampa, Panhandle, and other thriving cities.

As the Francklyn Land and Cattle company moved its herds further west, other outfits dropped into the lower end of the county. As the settlers came in the later 80's the cattlemen moved westward.

John Powers came into Greer county about 1880 and established a little ranch near the mouth of Sweetwater creek. He later brought more cattle and developed a herd of considerable size. Jim Haney and Ed Haney sold out to the "J-Bar-Y" outfit, operated by "Doc" Day. Powers also sold some of his cattle to Day but retained his brand--the "Jaybuckle."

The "Jaybuckle" and "H-Bar-Y" cattle were run west of the line camps established by Ikard and Harrold.

About the time John Powers established the "Jaybuckle" ranch in 1880, a youth of twenty three came from Cherokee county, Texas, with a small bunch of cattle to run on the broad prairies of Greer county over soil that had never been disturbed by a plowshare. That young man was Samuel

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Houston Tittle. He became foreman of the "Jaybuckle" outfit, remaining in the capacity until 1887, when he was appointed to succeed Tom Williamson as sheriff of Greer county. Jack Francis, who still has a fairly large bunch of cattle near Vinson, was a cowboy with the "Jaybuckle" and "H-Bar-Y" outfits. James Duffy, now president of the Guarantee State Bank of Mangum, worked on the range for these outfits in their later days.

B. Frank Simpson came to Greer County as a young man with the "Bar X" and "V Bar" outfits--among the earliest cowboys to locate in Greer county. Later he worked for the "H-Bar-Y" and "Jaybuckle" outfits, continuing with them until they were closed out. He continued in the cattle business and is today one of the most extensive cattle operators living in Greer county.

Cattle grazing leases were issued by the State of Texas to numerous cattlemen and cattle companies in 1885, granting them the privilege of grazing cattle upon

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certain lands in Greer county for a consideration of six cents an acre a year.

The first such lease was filed on record in Greer county on September 5, 1885, to run for five years from March 4, 1885. The lease was executed to James W. Taylor and E. W. Stephens, of Wichita county, calling for 67,000 acres. The lease was made under the classification statute of April 12, 1883, and was awarded to the highest bidder.

In 1884 the Day Land and Cattle company was organized in Texas and warrants obtained for 144,000 acres of Greer county land. During the following year the company leased a total of 203,000 acres of land.

When C. J. Crane was sent from Fort Sill, with a detachment of soldiers, in June, 1884, to eject all persons found in Greer county, he discovered ten families and about 60,000 head of cattle of which the Francklyn Land and Cattle company's herd comprised the major part. Lieutenant Crane notified all persons

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in Greer county to vacate by October 1, 1884, and on July 1, 1884, the settlers and cattlemen of Greer county ignored the order and did not suffer the hardships of removing their herds as the cattlemen of the Cheyenne country did. Sam White ran the "T-Cross" (from which the name "Teacros" was derived) and "O. M." outfits in the southwest part of old Greer county, in what is now Harmon county. Luther Clark, now a prosperous citizen of Quanah, Texas, has a ranch in the southwest part of old Greer county.

The "ZV" ranch was established by John Ledbetter and W.B. Tullis in what is now the Ladessa Community. A great part of that ranch is now owned by the estate of the T. N. Slaten. The late Nash Racey was foreman of the "ZV" ranch and Bill Racey, now a resident of the Ladessa Community, was employed as a cowboy.

Pumphrey and Olive ran the "Bar-10" and "AT" outfits and the Sea Wrights had the "Heart" and "TB" brands on the Greer County range and built a drift fence across the county, starting on North Fork and running just east

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of Mangum to Turkey Creek. A gate through which the early settlers came to Mangum was located near the dugout home of Lige Reeves. Mr. Boyd gathered cattle for Pumphrey and Olive several seasons, working on a commission basis.

Mr. Boyd began working for himself in 1885, establishing a small outfit (comparatively) at the northern corner of Greer county on the Texas side. He established headquarters at the mouth of Timber creek, five miles east of the present site of Sayre, in 1887. He remained there about nine years, moving to Mangum in 1896 and continuing his home here from that time until the present.

Cattlemen were forced out of the Cheyenne country in 1885 when President Grover Cleveland issued an order giving them 60 days to get their cattle out and roll up their wire. The previous Republican administration had leased the lands of the Cheyenne county to the cattlemen at 4 cents an acre a year. They bought wire at Wichita Falls, paying 15 cents a pound for it, and hauled it to their leases in the Cheyenne country to fence their holdings.

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When President Cleveland ordered the evacuation of all the cattlemen, a delegation went to Washington to plead with him to rescind the order. After waiting three or four days, the sturdy, picturesque cattlemen were granted an audience with the President of the United States.

After stating their case in the curt, concise manner of the western cattleman, they were chagrined when the president told them:

"Gentlemen, about ten days of your valuable time is gone. You had better get home and get busy."

Hopeless, the cattlemen started the journey back home to the Cheyenne country to carry out as best they could the orders of the government that had leased the land to them.

The cattlemen of the Cheyenne country were flat broke - financially ruined. It was late in the fall, they had no place to move their cattle, and a bitter winter was soon to come and take their cattle by the thousands.

Mr. Boyd sold out his holdings two or three times, "improving my condition a little along by degrees," he explained. Each time he sold out he acquired new properties. He still has small ranches in Texas and in Greer and Harmon counties.

Mr. Boyd had no trouble with Indians after he came to this country which he knew was in 1888, when the Northern Cheyennes, being held by the U. S. government at Fort Reno, packed up and stole away in the nighttime to travel northward to join the Sioux in the Dakotas. The commander of Fort Reno sent a detachment of soldiers to return the Indians and a fight occurred between the soldiers and Indians on the Cimarron river about 75 miles from Fort Reno. The Indians repulsed the soldiers and continued northward committing depredations as they traveled. Soldiers followed them, subdued them, and returned them to Supply. The historic massacres on the Washita river near Cheyenne and at Adobe Walls in the Texas Panhandle were earlier than the advent of the first white man into Greer county and several years before the arrival of Mr. Boyd.



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After the arrival of Mr. Boyd, however, Indians would steal into the herds and drive cattle away for beef or to kill for the hearts and tongues alone.

Mr. Boyd recalls one Indian depredation that made him quite angry at the time and which he still regrets deeply. He was working with Zack Miller (no relation to Col. Zack Miller of the 101 Ranch, but a well-known early-day cattleman in this section.) They had a bunch of sleek, fat cattle of which they were very proud.

One night Indians stole into the herd and drove away a bunch of the cattle. Following the trail, Mr. Boyd and Mr. Miller found the remains of 88 mother cows and one big, fat steer that had been killed by the Indians and only the hearts and tongues removed.

So far as can be determined, a white person was never killed by an Indian in old Greer county.

Among the prominent cattlemen of the latter days of the herd in Greer county was J. Ellison Carroll, who settled east of Jaybuckle Springs about 1892, after working for several years on ranches of the section. He established a fairly large ranch, with his headquarters on a place now owned by J.L. Gilliland. It was at the site of one

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of the "line camps" established by Ikard and Harrold. Carroll acquired about fifteen quarter sections of land and leased other land. He also had advantage of free range. Later he operated a ranch near the head of Haystack creek, in what is now Beckham county. The ranch is still in operation, being owned by E. L. Martin of Sayre.

Ellison Carroll won world-wide fame as a cowboy, especially as a roper. "He might occasionally be beaten roping one steer - I might beat him once in a while myself - but nobody could beat him when it came to roping a bunch."

Roping contests and roundups were popular in those days, not the staged rodeos of today but real contests in the sports of the range--on the open range and with range stock.

One such contest will live long in the memory of the old timers of Greer county. It took place after statehood on the Carroll ranch near the head of Haystack. "Coot" Fuqua roped, threw and tied a large steer in seventeen seconds. It was generally conceded that he had taken the championship from Carroll. Then Carroll rode out on his faithful white horse and succeeded in roping, throwing, and

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tying his steer in sixteen seconds, the fastest time ever made in steer roping by a human being—a record that has never been beaten and will probably stand for all time, since steer roping has given way to the easier calf roping in rodeo contests.

Captain Boyd, the late H. Y. Hoover, and Ed Davis were the official timekeepers. They were stationed under a wagon. At one time a steer started straight toward them—and it did not stop until it was almost upon them. Mr. Boyd recalls, as if it had been only yesterday, the wink that steer gave them as he stopped and whirled about. Motion pictures were made of the events that day. When the picture was exhibited it showed plainly the three timekeepers under the wagon and the steer winking at them.

Ellison Carroll left Greer county shortly after that historic roping contest and exhibited the pictures over the nation. Later he settled in West Texas and today he is sheriff of Reagan county, living at Big Lake, the county seat.

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The cattle business "just gradually played out" in old Greer county with the advent of the homesecker and the transformation of the territory from an open range to an agricultural section. The lower end of the county, around Altus and beyond was the first part to be evacuated by the cattlemen. The west part of the county was the last to be surrendered. A few small ranches still exist in old Greer county but none now think of old Greer county as a cattle county.

One of the most severe blows dealt the cattlemen of the latter days was in the summer of 1905, when a special election was held on the question of "herd law" and "free grass." It was a bitter campaign, with the cattlemen aligned against the home steaders. The homesteaders were in the majority by that time and they won the fight.