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BRANNON, PEARL. INTERVIEW 10536

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

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BRANNON, PEARL. INTERVIEW.

10536

Field Worker's name Ethel Mae Yates,

This report made on (date) April 22, 1938. 1938

1. Name Pearl Brannon

2. Post Office Address Elk City, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 801 North Adams

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 6, Year 1872

5. Place of birth Denton, Texas

6. Name of Father J. J. Lidle Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Hester Ann Lidle Place of birth Tennessee

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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Field Worker, Ethel Mae Yates,
April 22, 1938.

Interview with Pearl Brannon,
Elk City, Oklahoma.

My parents were J. J. and Hester Ann Lidle. Mother's maiden name was Rogers. A niece of Mother's, Mrs. Bell Guerry Whicit, on seeing Will Rogers on the screen and seeing the resemblance to Mother's people, sent \$5.00 back to Tennessee and had birth records looked up and learned that Will Rogers and my mother were second cousins.

I was born in Denton County, Texas. Father was a Texas Ranger. I can remember some terrible things that occurred when I was about five years old. I remember one night Father was gone on an Indian chase. We were living in a little one room log house that had a port-hole at one side of the fireplace. Mother told us children to be quiet for she believed that there were Indians around. The next morning we found tracks all

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under this hole where they had been trying to see in. They went to a neighbor's house and made a raid and killed all the family but a little boy, eight years old, and his little sister, four years old. It was the Finley family. The little boy's name was Jonnie. He took his little sister and climbed down in an old dug well that was partly filled with rubbish and covered over with logs. He said that the Indians walked over this well a number of times on these logs, but never did look in. There was a noted ranch-man who took Jonnie and raised him and in later years he went by the name of Morgan. I don't remember who took the girl.

There was a lady known as Granny Dodson who walked to work for this same Mr. Morgan, and many times the Indians chased her. My oldest sister stayed with her a while and when she died she still had sores around on her body and legs where the Indians had shot her with arrows.

On this same night that the Finley family was killed, my father's saddle horse that he rode on chases

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was stolen. He was a large bay horse named Bill.

About a week later this horse came back home and had an Indian rope tied on his neck. I guess one of our sons has the rope. This all took place in 1877 and the Indians were mostly Comanches.

Now in 1899 our family and four other families started from Archer County, Texas, in five covered wagons with a hundred and fifty head of cattle and some horses. When we got to Archer City there were fifty more covered wagons on their way to Oklahoma Territory. I remember one night we got all of the cattle bedded down and we ourselves went to bed. We woke up early next morning and every one of the cattle were gone. My husband went back four or five miles hunting for them. Finding no trace of them, he came back and went down the road that we were to go on and found them down the road about two miles and they had all bedded down again.

We crossed Red River at Doan's Crossing. There was straw in the river bed and a man to pilot us across, but we were held up at the river three days for our cattle to be inspected for ticks.

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When we came across one county we hadn't been able to get water for our stock and we saw a house back in a pasture with a windmill. My brother said "Here is where I am going to water these cattle," and when they got to the windmill, out came a man with his shotgun and said that we couldn't stop for he had lost two hundred head of cattle. My brother grabbed his gun and said that the cattle were going to drink and that he would pay for every tick that he got off of our cattle.

There were four families stopped in Greer County, so we were the only ones that came on to Roger Mills. We were on the road six weeks and camped out and cooked on camp fires. Food was scarce so we had to cook with cow chips most of the time. We had a tent but the rest of the crowd had to sleep on the ground or in the wagons. I guess there were about thirty boys along, acting cow-boys.

We first stopped at Berlin and rented a dugout from a Doctor Morrison. We paid him \$10 for a month's rent and we got there just the night before that awful prairie

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fire broke out that burned up the Perry family. They were living in tents and had plowed no fireguards. We stayed in the dugout two weeks then filed on a claim over on Beaver Creek twelve miles northeast of Elk City. On the claim we lived in our tent until we could get a dugout made. And then we learned that another man had filed on the claim so we gave it up and filed again and dug another dugout and the same thing happened again. So we filed three times before we got a home. We made a third dugout and covered it with boards and when it rained it just poured in and I would set buckets, pans and tubs all over the beds trying to keep them dry.

When we first came we got our mail at Berlin, then Hamon, and on May 28, 1900, my husband went to Hamon after the mail and it snowed on him.

Oh, yes, while we were living in the tent, one night there came up a wind storm and blew the tent down on us. We laid there until morning, then all of us crawled out unhurt.

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The first spring we put in a sod crop, but got no rain and in October we could turn up the sod and find seed just like we planted them. The following winter we had lots of snow and our cattle didn't know much about these canyons and would fall off into the canyons in the snow. We have had some terrible times trying to get them out.

A bunch of us went fishing one day and took our dinner. We went to where Sand Stone Creek empties into the Washita River. To our sad disappointment we caught no fish but we ate our lunch, visited a while and went home.

We went over in Greer County to see my brother and coming home the river was up so we couldn't cross and our horses swam across and left us.

I remember another time I was visiting my brother over in Greer County, eight miles from Granite, west of the Gyp hills. He lived in an old dugout, dug down in the ground and covered with dirt. Out in front was a brush arbor. We had been sitting out there in the

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evening in the cool and it became bedtime. He picked up his two small boys, carried them in the dugout, laid them on the bed, and when he laid them down he heard a rattlesnake sing. He told his wife to bring his gun and the lamp. He told the boys not to move, that there was a snake in the bed with them. He shot its head off and it was coiled up between the boys. He said that it took nerve to do it but his boys' lives depended on him. He said that he saw the snake just as he laid the babies down and thought once that he would grab its head, but then he knew if he missed it that it would get him.

The second year that we were here Elk City was getting under headway and my husband got a job working at what was called the Kansas City Lumber Yard. It was located where the Western Lumber Yard is now. We then moved in to town but had to go back every six months on our claims and I want to say that those people who came in the early days were the best people that I ever saw. They took it up on themselves to look after our cattle, would make our kraut, and look after our

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place. We never thought about locking a door and never did have one thing stolen. The first year that we were here my husband didn't get to work much. The big cattle owners were leaving the country, going to Mexico and other places with their cattle. They would have from three to five hundred head and some times more and as they came through, my husband and Mr. Littrel guarded home cattle one mile and then someone else would take up guard where they quit off and then another. This would reach for miles, trying to keep our home cattle out of the herds.

We came to this country for free grass and cheap feed as we owned lots of stock. We also brought a little money with us and we never suffered the hardships that our pioneer neighbors did. We loved these neighbors and sympathized with them and tried to help them, and we still think that they were the best people in the world.

We lived in Elk City several years then moved up near Durham, staying four years, then back to Elk City and have lived in and around here ever since.