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INDEX CARDS

Greer County-1888
Early Living Conditions
Friendship
Buffalo Bones

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

Field Worker's name Virgil Coursey

This report made on (date) May 27 1937

1. Name R. W. Eriscoe

2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 601 North Spurgeon

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 26 Year 1860

5. Place of birth Parker County, Texas

6. Name of Father I. Jeff Eriscoe Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Edna Biggs Place of birth Wales

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 5.

We came to Oklahoma from Parker County, Texas, in 1888. I had a wife and three children. My younger brother, who also came with me, had a family, too. My older brother came a year later.

Many others, who came here about this time, have probably already given you a description of the country. It did not, of course, look anything like it does now since it has been built up and the land put into cultivation.

I also probably had the same motive as most pioneers for coming here. I wanted to acquire some land and a home. I must say right here that I did not settle on the first land I came to. I looked around quite a bit. I finally decided that the river bottom land was the best all around land a man could till. I still think so. It will produce year after year, medium production with no complete failures as so often occurs on "tight" land. My claim was a quarter section, sixteen miles south and four miles east of Altus. I still own the place.

Well, I had good luck farming from the very start, as soon as I broke sod. One year I planted forty acres of cotton and gathered forty four bales. I also harvested over two thousand bushels ^{of} wheat from eighty acres of land.

I had to haul my stuff across two rivers to Vernon, Texas, to market it.

I remember one time when I had some wheat ground that I got into conversation with the owner of the mill. I asked him how much flour a bushel of wheat would make. He said my wheat was good wheat and the hull very light, so that I got a good turn out. I then told him how much flour I used a year, and we figured that I had sufficient wheat grown that year, that if it were ground into flour to run my family one hundred years.

The years 1893-94-95 were unusually dry years, and many people moved away and left their claims.

It was during this drouth that my cousin, R. J. Briscoe, acquired a farm near me. He had settled up near Friendship, but had a number of crop failures and was somewhat discouraged. I had a neighbor in the same frame of mind. He had threatened a number of times to pick up and leave, but about the time he was ready to go, it would rain, and he would change his mind. Well, one day he came over and asked me if I would go up and see my cousin relative to a trade. I told him I would if he was really in earnest, but that I suspected he would change his mind before

they could make a deal. He said no, he had definitely decided to leave, and would give possession for a pair of mules and a wagon. I knew he had in mind a pair of fine mules my cousin owned, so I went up and explained the proposition to my cousin. He said he would not trade his best mules, but had another pair he would trade. We hooked this team up to a wagon and drove to my neighbors place. The deal went through. My cousin got immediate possession of one hundred and sixty acres of land, a house, and all farming implements on the place, in exchange for the wagon and a pair of mules. My neighbor had no more than crossed the river on his departure when we got a good soaking rain. We made a good crop that year. The oats alone raised on my cousin's place, brought more than the value of the wagon and team.

Prairie chickens and rabbits were numerous when I settled here. I twisted many of a rabbit out of the hole. Our food was simple but substantial. I often gathered up buffalo bones and sold them at Wichita Falls. Flour could be bought for seventy-five or eighty cents a hundred pounds, if you didn't have wheat to trade for it, and bacon was seven and eight cents a pound. We ate quite a lot of corn syrup.

The Indians were always a curiosity to me. They never hesitated when they came to a creek or river, but drove right in lashing their horses, until the horses brought them out on the other side. I have often watched them pitch camp. The bucks would rarely do any work around camp. The squaws brought wood and prepared all food. The squaws prepared everything for the departure, even catching the horses and saddling them. The Indians were always friendly toward white people, and I never knew of any serious trouble with them.

Pioneering was all right, and I don't mind having gone through it, but I am proud of our progressiveness. I enjoy the modern conveniences of today. I love to read, and keep informed as to current events and the trend of the times. One can really "live" in these days.