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BRITTON, E. R.

INTERVIEW

#4876

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Field Worker, Ethel Mae Yates,
July 18, 1937.

Interview with E. R. Britton,
Elk City, Oklahoma.

Born January 2, 1850,
Tennessee.

Parents Allen Britton, Tenn.
Mary Britton, Va.

My wife, three children and I came to Blair County in an early day from Texas but can't recall just what year or day it was that we came. We came in covered wagons, crossed at Don's Ford as there wasn't any ferry. Just before we reached the ford we came up a narrow road where the wagon ruts were washed out up to the axles. My wife became excited for fear we would meet someone. If we had, we could not have gotten out of the road to save our lives. We camped out at night and were on the road three days.

We lived in Blair about two years, and then moved to Mangum. A friend and I went over to Lone Wolf's pasture to fish. Lone Wolf was Chief of the Kiowa Indians. We

fished in some lakes in his pasture but I don't know the name of the lakes. I had some good wolf-dogs so I took them along. Presently a man rode up and said something about seeing some loafer wolves. We got on our horses and rode over a hill to where there was a cow with a young calf. The wolves had killed the calf, almost eaten it up, and chewed the cow's ears all to pieces. By this time the dogs had discovered the wolves and we were off for a chase. The dogs caught one as we went around a little mountain. By the time I got to them they had it killed. My friend roped another and the dogs killed it. It was as large as any dog I ever saw. Then we started out for the old wolf, but it got away. The man who owned the cattle told me if I would kill it he would give me fifty dollars. But I left there in a few days so did not get it.

My family and I moved from there to Roger Mills County near Sweet Water. I contested a man and got his claim. I learned later that he would gladly have given it to me as he had not tried to prove up on it. We lived in a tent until able to build us a house and we cooked

on a monkey stove. This place was four miles north and two miles west of Sweet Water, on the old Moheetic Trail.

Many travelers stopped and camped with us. Nearly every one lived in dugouts. It was interesting to ride along the roads and see children stick their heads up out of the ground and watch us go by.

I farmed, and we had plenty of coyotes and rattle snakes for company. Our oldest boy would carry a box to the field with him and tie it on his plow. When he killed a rattlesnake he cut the rattles off and put them in his box. He did this until he had his box almost full. I remember one morning when my wife got up she heard a snake singing. She began searching for it and found it wrapped around an old fashioned coffee mill that we had nailed on the wall.

There were plenty of deer and prairie chicken when we came here. I would go on deer hunts. We had all the deer meat and prairie chicken we wanted to eat. But chasing coyotes was my hobby. I killed sixty-four of them one year.

I have a horse-shoe hammer that I bought about sixty-five years ago. This is how I came to own it. I had borrowed it from a neighbor and sent it home by one of the boys. Some way he broke a nick out of it so the neighbor came to me about it. I asked him what it cost. He said thirty-five cents so I paid him and kept it. I brought it to Texas when I came and put an iron handle in it and it has been one of my coyote weapons. When I went horseback riding I tied it on the saddle. When the dogs caught a coyote or I roped one I jumped off my horse and knocked it in the head with my hammer.

I have a coverlet that my oldest sister wove over seventy years ago. I have taken it on all the rounds with me and it is still good. It is a rose and white color. I have a side saddle that I had made for my daughter forty-five years ago. I also have a ten dollar bill and a twenty dollar bill of Southern money that were carried through the Civil War.

I will be eighty-six years old the 2nd of next
January and my wife will be eighty-two the 24th of
December. We are both enjoying good health considering
our age.

