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INDEX CARDS

Chickasaw Nation  
Tribe-Choctaw  
Lebanon  
Hunting

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

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt.

This report made on (date) July 13, 1937. 1937

1. Name Robert Benjamin Brinkley

2. Post Office Address Lone Wolf, Kiowa County, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Rammart Apt. House.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 1 Year 1874

5. Place of birth Lebanon Indian Territory.

Now in Marshall County, Oklahoma.

6. Name of Father Benjamin Brinkley. Place of birth Mississippi.

Other information about father One-eighth Choctaw Indian.

7. Name of Mother Esther McCoy Brinkley. Place of birth Not positive

Other information about mother Pioneer Territory Woman.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for list of subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and refer firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 6

Ethel B. Tackitt,  
Interviewer.

Interview With Robert Benjamine  
Brinkley, Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.

I was born near the present town of Lebanon in Marshall County, on September 1, 1874. This was in the old Indian Territory days.

My father was one-eighth Choctaw Indian and came from Mississippi in a very early time. My mother was Esther McCoy Brinkley and her people also came to the Indian Territory long ago. My grandparents on my mother's side of the family were John and Nancy Jane Stewart and they did much of the raising of myself and sister and from them I learned of the family stories which I shall relate.

They often told me how when I was a very little baby, that my parents lived some six miles away from Grandmother's home. The woods were thick with brush and vines and great trees were every where. The roads were only bridle paths as everybody rode horseback or walked when they went places.

Mother decided that she would take me, an infant, in her arms and ride over to see Grandmother. She had a small bundle of clothing for me tied up and hung to her saddle.

Shortly after leaving home she found that she was being followed by a panther. She urged her horse but the panther

-2-

continued to follow her and at last gave chase in earnest. Mother had been taught that either a panther or a bear would stop if any article was thrown down by the person chased and would tear the article to pieces, before taking up the chase again. In this way the person could gain a little time and distance on the animal. Remembering this, mother began to drop articles of clothing from the bundle. The panther would stop to examine them and she rushed on. At last frantic with fear, mother clutched my small clothing with all her might with her teeth and with one hand dropped piece by piece as savingly as possible and with the other hand whipped her tired horse, urging him to his best speed. She managed to keep far enough ahead to reach Grandmother's place before the brute got us down but the horse was clawed all over the hips and legs. I am wondering how many people would know now what to do under such circumstances.

In my childhood children were taught to fear the Devil. I was under the impression that the devil had horns and that if I did anything bad, I might be carried off by him.

When I was about seven years old, I, one day, observed a large creature with a head of large wide-spread horns come walking up the path right toward our house.

-3-

I was sure that it was the Devil coming after me and I made a dash for the house. Mother saw that it was beautiful buck deer, so she took the Winchester which always sat ready and went out and killed the deer, so we could have fresh venison. Then she came back to the house and called me to open the door which I had shut and fastened. But no sir! I was scared and had crawled under the bed.

The house was like all log houses of that time. The door was made of heavy slabs and fastened from the inside with a peg which went through the wooden catch on the door and then into a hole bored in the end of a solid log.

There was no way to get the door open or me from under the bed. She coaxed and reasoned. That was early in the morning but it took her until noon to get me to open the door. I will never forget that deer.

There were all kinds of game in the woods; deer, black bear, turkeys, and wild hogs, and there were also many kinds of varmints, foxes, wild cats and wolves. The coyotes were never considered dangerous to people. But the timber wolf as well as cougars and panthers were dangerous, especially if they were hungry.

-4-

When I was about sixteen years old, one night I walked up the creek about a mile to attend a dance at the house of a neighbor and as I was walking back alone after midnight I heard a sound which I took to be made by sleeping hogs, which were numerous in that section and I <sup>gave</sup> a little heed, except the caution which all people exercised in those days. Everybody watched as they went about. In crossing a creek I saw that it was a large panther which I had heard and I hastened as fast as I could. It gave chase but near our house was a nine foot wire fence. This I went over in a hurry and the panther struck its head on it but made no attempt to climb it. I went into the house, got help and our hounds which we kept for hunting 'varmint', and went back. We caught the panther before day and he was a monster, measuring nine feet from tip to tip.

I killed my first deer when I was twelve years old and it gave me my first case of buck ague. That was what it was called in those days when a man got a bad case of nerves and shook all over.

I took the old Winchester which sat by the door and without asking Grandmother I got on my horse and went hunting and when not a great way from the house I saw a large buck

asleep under some bushes and as I was on the wind side from him, he did not see me. So I let him have the load and it hit him in the back of the head and killed him dead.

When I saw what had happened, I began to shake all over and yell at the top of my voice. My uncle Dee McCoy who was about a half mile away heard me and thinking that I had shot myself rushed to me. It was great fun to everybody to find that killing a deer had given me the buck ague.

When I got back to the house Grandmother said, "Son, don't ever take that gun again without telling me, as you might lose it in the woods".

Then to my astonishment, she took from the open place under the lock of the gun a roll of money. There was eight hundred dollars in bills and I had carried the gun into the woods, killed a deer, and taken the buck ague. It was a wonder I had not thrown the gun down and run.

There were no such things as banks in that country and Grandmother had kept her money concealed in that gun.

I have lived better than sixty-two years in Oklahoma and have friends in all classes of people.

I danced in my childhood for the amusement of Jesse and Frank James and their clan as they stopped for the night in



the home of my grandparents near Lebanon. My grandparents sympathized with them.

For this dancing, Jesse James gave me a gold watch and a silk handkerchief. These things I treasured for many years and now I regret that I did not keep them as souvenirs until the present.