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BRUNELL, W. H.

INTERVIEW

#1308

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Ruth Lee Gamblin,
Field Worker.
May 3, 1937.

1308

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PIONEER DAYS WITH QUANNAH PARKER
Interview with W. H. Brunell,
North 8th Street, Frederick,
Oklahoma.

I was born in Missouri in September, 1859. My first trip to the Territory was in 1878, and I stayed until 1881, then returned to Missouri. In the year of 1886 I returned to the Territory together with my mother, father, and two sisters.

The reason we came was to establish a ranch, and this we did in the Kiowa-Comanche country. We made the trip in wagons which took us two weeks. We brought 386 head of cattle, together with our household furniture. We did not stay on the ranch long, but moved over to Old Greer which is now Jackson County, and we lived in a half dugout.

My first work was cattle business. I would feed my cattle on winter grass and get them fat, then sell them on the ground to parties going to Wyoming at the rate of \$29.00 per head. I never tried to farm.

The Indians were my best friends at that time. They never gave me any trouble. I lived with Quannah Parker in 1887 and did work such as interpreting for him. At that time he lived ^{OR} Cache Creek in Comanche county. He had a ten room house. I might say a room for each wife.

At this time he had sixteen thousand dollars in a bank in Denison, Texas. I was with him when he married his last wife, Too Nicey. He had twenty-two children, and six wives. I always ate with them, and they really had good meals. I shall never forget one thing they did and that was to strip all the children each morning and give them a bath on the porch with ice water regardless of the weather. He stole one wife and finally had to pay \$300.00 and a good pony for her. All his children were beautiful. At the time I worked for him, he was seventy-seven years of age and very smart.

When we lived in Old Greer County we had to go to Fort Sill or Denison, Texas, for our supplies. Fort Sill was eighty miles and Denison, Texas, was 250, but I always went to Denison because I did not like Fort Sill. I went once a year, which would take around three weeks to make the trip. I would take four horses with me and strap my supplies on their backs. We had plenty of wild game for meat, which would consist of wild turkey, rabbit, etc. But would have to go after other supplies. Groceries were much cheaper at that time than they are now. I would pay \$2.50 per hundred for the best flour. Denison was also a railroad town, which was another reason for

our going there for supplies. Some things were very high, such as I paid at one time \$1.00 for a spool of thread and 50¢ for a package of needles.

Some people say there is gold in this county, but I don't believe them as I saw in the early days "Old California Gold miners" go through and if there had been any gold they would have stayed. I even heard old trappers say that they had looked for gold long before the Civil War.

The old Chisholm trail was made by cattle being driven north. It ran north and south. It was very rough and hard to travel.