

FISHER, E. L.

INTERVIEW.

#8983

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

FISHER, E. L.

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Field worker's name Robert H. Boatman

This report made on (date) October 25, 1937

1. This legend was secured from (name) E. L. Fisher

Address Washington Oklahoma, R.# 1

This person is (male ~~or female~~) ~~White, Negro, Indian,~~

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story _____

Early days of Indian Territory.

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____

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Robert H. Boatman,
Investigator,
October 25, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. E. L. Fisher,
R. # 1, Washington, Oklahoma.

Early Days of Indian Territory.

Mr. Fisher was born in Texas, March 21, 1857, and continued to live here until at the age of twenty-one years. He came to the Indian Territory in 1878.

The Territory then was a very rugged and wild country and there were a great many Indians here though not so many white people and almost all the white people who were here were refugees from some state who had come into the Territory to escape punishment on account of felony which they had committed.

Everyone carried a pistol and a Winchester which was known as a saddle gun.

The country was full of wild game and also full of what were called wild Indians though if a white person could gain the friendship of the Indians there were no better friends to be had.

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Mr. C.C. Fisher established himself on Red River north of Gainsville, Texas, in the Indian Territory and there built a ferry boat and operated it for the purpose of crossing people from and to the Territory. Here, he continued to operate the ferry boat for some three years and while there he gained the friendship of several Indians and also of some of the outlaws. That is what most all the white people were called then in the Territory. After a continuation of three years operation of the ferry boat Mr. Fisher was married.

He sold out his boat and with his wife he then moved to the Choctaw Nation and here he settled near the South Canadian River in what is now Hughes County.

Mr. Fisher took a lease on some land there from an Indian woman, Sookie McCarty, a widow, and cleared out some of the land, built a log house of hewed logs and planted a small crop of corn; the land was very productive and it was an uncommon thing for corn to yield less than sixty bushels per acre.

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Some of the Choctaw Indians were very friendly though very watchful at all times and the best guides and trailers Mr. Fisher has ever known.

On one occasion there was a white man who lived some few miles up the river who came down one night and stole a set of harness from an old Indian woman. Early the following morning this Indian woman came along by the home of Mr. Fisher. She was tracking something along very slowly; the thief had come right through the back yard of Mr. Fisher's home and she followed into the yard.

She said to Mr. Fisher, "come, me track him" and sure enough with little difficulty she tracked that fellow right on to his house and there she found her harness.

She carried with her a large black snake whip and when she found the harness she fell on the man with her whip and such a whipping no man has since known. She then made the thief take the harness and carry it back home, with her following close after him with the black snake whip ready at all times.

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Horse thieves were very numerous in the Choctaw Nation and an association was organized and was known as the Anti-Horse Thief Association.

Mr. Fisher was the Chief or President of this Association in that section of the country and through this Association many horses, cattle and articles which had been stolen were recovered and returned to the owners.

Mr. Fisher said that in about 1890 the Territory began to be developed very rapidly, people came fast; homes were built; farms cleared and broken out; railroads were being built; townsites were laid out and there was one continual thing following another for the Territory was fast becoming an agricultural country from what was once the best grazing country known to man.

Mr. Fisher died some two years ago after living to see the country fully developed; he is buried at the little cemetery in Seminole County.