

GILL, FRANK.

INTERVIEW

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

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Field Worker's name Ethel V. Elder,

This report made on (date) January 14, 1938

1. Name Frank Gill,

2. Post Office Address Waurika, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Rock Island Addition.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 15, Year 1852.

5. Place of birth McLennan County, Texas.

6. Name of Father Voll Gill, Place of birth Germany.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Myra Evans, Place of birth Texas.

Other information about mother Three-quarter Cherokee Indian.

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 10

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Ethel V. Elder,
Investigator,
January 14, 1938.

Interview with Frank Gill, Negro,
Rock Island Addition,
Waurika, Oklahoma.

My father, Voll. Gill, was born in Germany, died in 1850 and is buried at Bosqueville, Texas. My mother, Myra Evans, was born in the Cherokee Nation, was three-quarters Cherokee, died in 1861 and is buried at Bosqueville, Texas. My grandfather, on my mother's side, was Hall Evans, who died in 1884 and is buried at Bosqueville, Texas. My grandmother, on my mother's side, was Nancy Evans; she was born in the Choctaw Nation and is buried at Waco, Texas.

My father was nineteen years old when he came from Germany and settled in Alabama on a farm. He lived there about five years and went to Texas and settled at Bosqueville, Texas, a very small town at that time, and lived there for twenty years. He bought several gins, eighteen farms, and over three thousand acres in all. He owned over fifty slaves and kept more until the date of their freedom. Mother's folks were Father's slaves. Mother

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was also a slave of his and after the slaves were freed he married her.

There were sixteen of us children, one sister died before the Civil War ended, one died after freedom of the slaves, and one brother the same year; my mother died the same year about two months later.

I started out to work for myself when I was twelve years old ^{and} the first man I worked for was Uncle Wash Hider, who died about two years ago at the age of ninety-six years. He owned a stock ranch called the Shackelford Ranch in Texas and I worked there until I was nineteen years old, then went to Kansas and worked there for five years for a man named Lon Gattlin, owner of a cattle ranch. After that I went back to the Shackelford Ranch and worked there one year then went to North China Springs on the North Bosque River in Texas and worked for Davis brothers on a stock ranch. I farmed a small tract of land for myself and broke wild horses for Davis brothers and helped them in my spare time. Later, I went to Valley Mills, Texas, and worked for Will Simpson on his cattle ranch.

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He had a large number of horses and I rode and broke forty-three head of horses for him. I worked there about six months, then went back to work for Davis Brothers and stayed there for five years. I next went to a little place called Golson Valley, Texas, and worked for man named Barry Mantel on his farm, worked there for about six years, then decided I would come over to Indian Territory.

I first settled at Ardmore and worked on a truck farm for a man named Will Pardo, worked for him two years and have worked for several different people for short times on the range. I worked for Jim Biffle for a number of years on his farm and handled cattle for him, too, then settled where I now live in the extreme north part of Waurika. I own all the north half of this place

---Buffalo---

Buffalo are strange animals, they can only see on each side of them, that is one reason why the Indians drove so many off of bluffs as they could not see in front of them when they came to the edge of the bluff. You can not shoot

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them in the forehead and kill them as they have two skulls about one inch thick to the second skull. I have seen about two hundred head killed and piled up in one pile. They used to peddle the meat to the markets in Waco, Texas.

---Government Employees---

Lee and Reynolds worked a section of sixty-five square miles for the Government. They had one hundred twenty-two double wagons, they worked eight yoke of oxen and eight yoke of mules to these wagons and sold meat and supplies to the Indians. They had to go a distance of one hundred and ten miles to Fort Dodge, Kansas, to get their supplies and sometimes it would take a week and longer to make the trip.

---Outlaws---

In the early days in Texas, Sam Bass, Joe Collins and several other outlaws and cattle rustlers have stayed at our house for weeks and months at a time. They ran cattle to market that they had stolen from the open range.

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They made a raid on the bank at Waco, Texas, one time. They went to Round Rock, Texas, to make a raid on the bank there and were shot and Sam Bass was killed by a Texas Ranger, Thomas Floyd, and is buried there.

An old man of the name of Ferther went to Waxahachie, Texas, to get some provisions and got drunk after he collected about \$450.00 for some cattle he had sold. The outlaws got after him to rob him and the Boman boys were scared they would catch him so they came running after me to go help them rescue the old man. I jumped on my horse with my six-shooter and my Winchester tied to my saddle and got him back across the Brazos River. There was a black line across the bridge in the middle and the laws were not allowed to cross this line. Just as I crossed over on my side line the laws rode up and thought I was an outlaw.

---Indians---

When I was living up close to the Canadian River working for a man on the cattle range about ten or fifteen

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Indians came through one day, yelling and shooting their bows and arrows, and made a raid on our cattle and stole eight head. All we cattle hands started shooting at them and we killed all of them before they could get away.

When an Indian had his headband of feathers on with two red feathers on each side and one white in the middle he was not dangerous and did not want to fight, but if he took the white feather off he was sure on the warpath.

Texas cattle driven across the river from Texas were hard to keep up in the north part of Oklahoma in the early day on the open range, for when the first real cold wind came from the north they would stampede and start back to Texas. We had over four hundred head one time up close to the Canadian River on a little creek we called Buffalo Creek that stampeded and started south. The Boman Brothers who were herding the cattle at the time sent a message to me to meet them at Camp Supply, so I started and got there about three o'clock in the afternoon at the mess house, ate my dinner and changed horses and started out again.

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and had gone about eight miles down on Buffalo Creek when I came to some tall grass that led off the roadside.

I thought the cattle had gone that way as the tall grass was all trodden down, so I started down that way and I saw a tepee over in the tall grass and all at once the Indians began to spring up out of the grass in every direction all around me. The old chief started to motion to me to come on but I stopped and he came on to me and held up his hand and helped me off my horse, and had the horse watered and fed and then went with me into the tepee and offered me something to eat, but I could not even think about eating 'cause I was scared most to death, I just knew that I was going to be killed. They all sat around on the ground on their blankets and about midnight the old chief got up and lit his big old pipe and took two draws of smoke and passed it around and the rest of them took one draw; it seemed to me like it was thirty minutes before they ever would blow the smoke out of their mouths.

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They never said one word to each other, after they did get through smoking they put their blankets down and spread a buffalo robe down for me to sleep on and gave me another to cover with. They they all jumped up and began their war dance all around me after which they all sat down on their blankets again until about four o'clock when they all jumped up again and started their dancing around me again. The old chief came over to me and asked me if I was afraid of them and I said, "No, why should I be afraid of you people?" (I was scared most to death, but would not tell him so. I had not closed my eyes all night or hardly moved.) The old chief patted me on the head and they all then lay down and went to sleep and I guess I slept about one hour for when I woke up it was daylight. The old chief asked me if I wanted to go and I said, "Yes". He told me then I could go if I wanted to, so I left and took my leisure time getting off out of sight of the Indians, but how I did ride when I got to where they could not see me and I was burning the breeze,

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about eight miles over the hills when I met the soldiers coming, they were after these Indians. There were about one hundred in this bunch of Indians. They were Kiowas and I know the only reason that I escaped alive was that I made them believe I was not afraid of them.

After I met the Boman boys with our cattle, we crossed the river and camped about noon to rest our horses. Along came about ten or fifteen Cheyenne Indians who wanted forty head of our cattle but we would not give them up so that made them mad and they rode through the herd and shot several of the fattest ones. They thought they would come back after we left and get these cattle they had shot, but we beat them to it. We piled them up and piled brush and leaves over them and burned them up so they could not get them. We shot the horses from under some of the Indians and they decided to go on and let us alone, as they saw they could not frighten us.

One time when I lived in Texas the Indians made a raid on a farm house close to where we lived at Bosqueville,

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bound the woman, hand and foot, and put her in a chair, killed her husband, and robbed her of everything they wanted. They then put her husband in the fireplace, built up a fire and made her watch him burn until his head was burned off, then left her to get loose the best she could.

I met my wife at Bosqueville, Texas, and was married in 1886 and went to work for Davis brothers. We have had ten children, eight boys and two girls, all of whom are living today.