

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

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HARRIS, CLAYTON WEST INTERVIEW 10310

Field worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt

This report made on (date) March 14, 1933

1. This legend was secured from (name) Jr. Clayton West Harris

Address Hobart, Oklahoma, 925 S. Washington Street

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

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story _____

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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Ethel B. Tackitt,
Investigator,
March 14, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. Clayton West Harris,
816 S. Washington Street, Hobart, Okla.

I was born and reared in Texas and my father, Clayton West Harris, Sr., was a native of Tennessee, while my mother, Nancie Gilbert Harris, was born in Virginia.

I came with my parents and other members of my family to the Chickasaw Nation in Indian Territory in 1891 and we settled on an Indian lease near Oakland, which is now in Marshall County. This was a fine farming district and many of the Chickasaw Indian families were intelligent and their children were being educated. The Eastwood, Tharp and Pickins families were among our neighbors.

When we first settled at Oakland there were only two stores, but soon there were mills and gins built and as Denison, Texas, was not far away, freighting from there was not so difficult but what it soon grew to be a thriving town. Many stores were built, cotton gins and grist mills, as well as sawmills were established, churches and

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schools were built and many people purchased town lots expecting Oakland to continue to be a good town and a county seat.

There were great plans made for the place by the old settlers as well as the white people who had come in to the Nation with the expectation of making homes when statehood should be established which all thinking people were positive would take place within a few years. This was the local condition when plans for the railroad began to be assured. Hopes ran high, Oakland boomed and people bought more property.

Then the crash came. A man by the name of Nub Tolner who owned land two miles to the east, had plenty of money and a way of getting things that he wanted. He got very friendly with the railroad surveyor and when the roadbed was surveyed it was found, to the disappointment of all property owners, that the railroad would miss Oakland by two miles. There was almost a riot, and no small amount of bad-bleed among the people, but it did no good and the town of Madill was laid out just a few miles east of Oakland, which struggled along for a few years, then Madill became the county seat and store after store

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moved away. Town lots were discarded and dwellings fell into decay or were moved away and in a few years Oakland was only a memory of the prosperity which it enjoyed before the railroad came and Madill was established.