

GRAYSON, A. J.

INTERVIEW

8513

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

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#8513

GRAYSON, A. J. INTERVIEW.

Field worker's name Robert H. Boatman

This report made on (date) September 9, 1937

1. This legend was secured from (name) A. J. Grayson

Address Blanchard, Oklahoma.

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

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story _____

Development of some early towns, namely Ardmore, Tecumseh,

Earlsboro, Blanchard.

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

An Interview with A. J. Grayson, Blanchard, Oklahoma.
By - Robert H. Boatman - Field Worker.
September 10, 1937.

As a boy I grew up in Alabama; I was born near Huntsville on October 19th, 1852, and as I grew up it became my duty to oversee the plantation which was a large tract of land consisting of several thousand acres cultivated mostly in cotton. This plantation which my mother owned was worked mostly by negroes and we had many slaves until the war was over and after the negroes were freed we hired them and ran the plantation right along until 1880 when I left Alabama and came to Cooke County, Texas, where I took up some school land and farmed for one year. Then I moved to Denison where I began work for the M. K. & T. Railroad and it was here that I borrowed the only money I ever borrowed in my life. It happened that the big strikes were on and I ran short of money. I had never run any charge accounts and didn't want to start any, so I borrowed \$35.00 from a Dr. Atchison who was president of the bank at Denison. I worked for the railroad company at Denison, Texas, for four years then I moved to Wolfe, Texas, and here I established a furniture store in 1886. I did not have a large stock at

first though I soon had a good business and built up a good trade and here I remained for seven years and in 1892 I left Texas and came to the Indian Territory and settled at Ardmore. Ardmore was a small town then with a population of twelve hundred.

Here I established myself again in the furniture business and began to boost for ^{the} town. I have always made a practice wherever I was to try to build up a town. At one time it was my pleasure to own all the furniture business of Ardmore; then in 1894 I came to Purcell and bought out a bankrupt stock of goods and I had it sold out in six months time. Then I went to Tecumseh and put in a furniture store and while here the Kickapoo run was made. I didn't intend to make that run though I made it any way. It was this way: I took my horse and buggy and the wife and baby and drove over to watch them run. I drove up to the front line and was sitting there waiting to watch them when the gun was fired and the stampede began. My horse got scared and away we went and I mean we were traveling for the horse was running away and when I got him stopped we were away ahead of

everything and about all the run I cared to see was getting back home and as I was coming home people were "digging dug-outs, stretching tents and making every imaginable thing to live in.

Shawnee at that time was all farming land in cultivation. While at Tecumseh I visited practically all the leading markets of the world and also was in the town fight between Shawnee and Tecumseh though when the site for Shawnee was laid off the people from Shawnee came over and offered us free lots if we would move from Tecumseh but we would not. Then in 1900 I moved on to Earlsboro and here with five other men I organized a bank and I was elected president of the same and served for six years. That same year I built a nice home as I had done at each place I had been established before. Then in 1907 I resigned at the bank and again moved, this time to McClain County at Blanchard and here I again went into the furniture business. There were only some two or three shacks at Blanchard then. Zeb Short was the first man to have a store in Blanchard and R. E. L. McClain was the first postmaster there. The country was only a big ranch then. So I

set out to help build a town. I helped to build the first school and the first church building ever built in Blanchard and was the first mayor of the town. All the first buildings of Blanchard were of wood and sheet iron and an early settler hit it hard as there were no roads - no bridges and people were coming in from the country wanting donations to build a bridge and another fellow and I went down east and bought enough lumber to build two bridges across Walnut Creek and the railroad company hauled the lumber as they were trying to boost for a town also. I have donated money for the upbuilding of the University of Norman and I have helped build practically all the roads and bridges in McClain County. Then as time passed I was appointed postmaster at Blanchard by President Wilson and here I served eight years as postmaster under President Wilson's administration and eight months under President Harding's administration.