

GUINN, TEXANNER.

INTERVIEW

#12375

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

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Field Worker's name Grace Kelley.This report made on (date) Dec., 10, 1937.

1. Name Texanner Guinn.
2. Post Office Address Dewar, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) In the northwest part of town.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1855.
5. Place of birth Georgia.

6. Name of Father John Barker. Place of birth Georgia.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Caroline Bruce. Place of birth Georgia.

Other information about mother _____

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 16.

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Grace Kelley,
Investigator,
December 10, 1937.

An Interview With Texanner Guinn,
Dewar, Oklahoma.

MOVING TO THE INDIAN TERRITORY.

When we came to the Indian Territory from Arkansas we kept to the high country so that we wouldn't have to cross any big dangerous streams as there were no bridges in 1888. We entered the Territory about fifteen miles south of Fort Smith and came through the mountains to McAlester. We forded the Washita but stayed on the south side of the South Canadian. From McAlester we went to Pauls Valley, which was eighty miles west, and from there on to Purdy where we stopped and rented a farm.

We had one horse team and one ox team or two covered wagons. The boys rode two other horses and drove the three cows. We had butchered four hogs and brought them in one of the wagons but we didn't move any live hogs nor chickens. We had plenty of dried fruit but I didn't know how to can anything at that time.

PURDY.

Purdy was a white settlement and had only one Indian family, though the ground was owned by the Chickasaw Indians.

There were two stores at Purdy, one of which was named for one of the store owners. The other store was owned by my brother-in-law, T. J. Barker. There was a blacksmith shop owned by another brother-in-law whose name was Captain Barker. There was a gin and a grist mill but I don't remember their names.

THE NEW HOME.

Tom Wilburn had leased a lot of ground from the Indians and sub-leased it to other white people for farms. We had to pay the Indians for a permit to stay here and make farms, too. Tom Wilburn had a big ranch and a farm of his own.

Our first home was a complete dugout and it was fine and warm - a very comfortable place to live but not as much room as we needed. A large hole was dug, like for a cellar, about eighteen foot square. Logs were laid like a log house is built inside this square hole to keep the dirt from caving in. Logs were laid over head and rags and brush put over them to keep the dirt from sifting down, then dirt was heaped on top of that and it looked like a big mound or cellar. It was sixteen foot square when

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finished. Then we built a half dugout. The logs extended half of the room above the ground and had a shingle roof. There wasn't as many steps to climb and we could have a window so it was considered better than the whole dugout. We lived there a year and raised corn and cotton.

MAIL AND THE RAILROAD.

The railroad was ^{at} Pauls Valley and went right up the Washita River on the south side. It was about seven miles north of our place which was about three miles west of Purdy.

The mail was delivered either by pony or buggy from Pauls Valley to Wallsville to Purdy, but there were no rural routes. Everybody had to go ^{to} the post office.

OKLAHOMA OPENING -- 1889.

The next year we rented a farm from an Indian and built a log house to live in. We raised cotton, corn, cattle and hogs that year.

That spring everybody was talking about the Opening and how we could get a farm of our own. We were very

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anxious about it as we felt we could do much better on our own place. As it was we paid some rent to the Indians and all the improvements we made belonged to them when we moved. If it was ours every improvement we made would be permanent and we would be adding to our worldly goods. In other words we would be improving our financial standing by taking a new place. My husband, James Guinn, and our boy, Willie, went to the run but the rest of us stayed at home. (We raised six boys and seven girls so we hardly ever went anywhere. It was so much trouble to camp out with a large family of little tots). Mr. Guinn took a good horse team and one wagon up there and he said there were women and children in the run. Some of them had buggies and would ride to a certain place, jump off and drive their stake down. His land was good prairie but it just had two cottonwood trees on it. He had been used to timber land all his life - where he had logs to build fences, barns, houses, troughs, benches, and so many things that were needed on a farm or home. After he staked the place he came home to get ready to move but the more he thought about it the more certain he was that he couldn't do anything without some trees for improvements, so he never went back to it.

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GOVERNMENT SALE.

That year the Government had a sale of mules that had been military mules but for some reason weren't good enough for that work. My husband bought two spans of good ones that were not damaged in any way unless they were getting too old for the army use. At any rate there was nothing that we could see wrong with them and they made good farm animals. I imagine one reason the Government had this sale was to help the people who were trying so hard to get ahead, and some of them were having a very hard time doing it.

1894 WE MOVED FROM PURDY
TO EUFAULA.

Where we lived it was a high flat country where the wind was always blowing. In talking to other men my husband heard about how good the country around Eufaula was - more like he had been used to. He decided he wanted to get to where the land was black and better for agriculture, so we moved.

We had two mule teams, two ox teams and a horse team, five wagons in all. The ox teams were hitched to one wagon

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but there was a trailer wagon to the horse team besides the regular wagon.

We took everything we owned; household goods such as furniture, clothes, bedding, tubs and pots and things like that. My husband was a good provider for a very large family so we had a lot of those. There was a thousand pounds of meat and lard. There were the plows and tools for the outside work. And feed for the teams, twenty-nine head of cattle and five head of saddle horses. We also had two shepherd dogs that were good with the cattle and for hunting.

We went from Purdy to Pauls Valley where we stayed the first night then we went on to McGee and camped the next night on the river. We went down the river until we came to Young's Crossing or ford about ten or eleven o'clock of the third day. The South Canadian River is a very tricky stream. The horse team took the first wagon across and the two yoke of oxen were started right behind them. The water was so swift that the first or leader team was washed around to the side of the wagon and facing the bank they had just left. The boy had to get out into

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the water to get them straightened out. That was the only trouble we had crossing. The only thing we lost on that trip was a heifer that disappeared the night we camped. We looked for it but it must have wandered off too far so we had to leave it. Konawa was the next place we came to, then Sasakwa, Wewoka, Wetumka, and we stayed all night at Proctor and then went on to Eufaula where we had a family reunion for several days and went on to Dogtown which wasn't a town but a name of a white farming settlement five miles east of Dustin on the North Canadian River.

DOGTOWN - 1894.

A bunch of white folk lived on the south side of the North Canadian River on farms - so you see they didn't live close enough together to be a town. Every family had from three dogs on up. There were so many "varmint" in there was the reason. It's a hilly country and the hills are covered with trees and rocks so it's a good place for the "varmint" to live. The bottoms make good farms with woods or hills all around them. The young men named the white settlement "Dogtown" for a joke and right

across the river there were several Indian families so that was called "Squawtown". The ones who lived there were not outlaws.

We put up a big tent for the beds and perishable stuff was kept in there. Some of the boys slept in the covered wagons. All the cooking, washing and eating was done out doors until we could get a log house up.

GOING TO MARKET.

It was thirty-five miles to market but we always had plenty to eat though we didn't realize it at the time. We bought sugar by the hundred pound sacks and flour by the hundred and thousand pounds at a time. Our houses were of logs and the mice were ^{so}/_{bad} that my husband hung some shelves from the rafters using wire for the supports. The flour was put on these shelves where the mice couldn't get to it as they would have ruined it in no time.

One time he, Jim Martin, and Virge Crawford each took a wagon of cotton to Eufaula and it started raining. The North Canadian River came up so high that there was no crossing it. They were on the north side so they came down the river to Bun Ryal's Crossing. They built a raft

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and started across but left their teams, wagons and supplies at Ryal's. They had to go a half mile downstream before they could get across. The Ryals took care of the stock for four or five days or until the river got down low enough for them to go back for them and the supplies.

Usually he took two or three loads of cotton to market at the same time and most of our buying was done at that time. This is an example of our clothing purchases: Seven pairs of boots for my husband and the boys. Eight pair of shoes for me and the girls. Suits for the boys; six of them, and big hats for them all. A whole bolt of red flannel for undershirts. A whole bolt of linsy and of broadcloth for dresses. A whole bolt of checked gingham for aprons to go over the dresses. There was other underwear, too, for we dressed our children warm and they were all healthy.

SMALL DOCTOR BILLS.

We only had one doctor bill to pay for sickness of our children. One of our boys had brain fever and we had to get a Doctor Bollinger and he charged us sixty dollars for the treatment. Everyone knew how to treat malaria and colds and other such illnesses without getting a doctor.

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PLENTY OF MILK.

One reason our children were so healthy was that they always had plenty of milk and butter. We had close to thirty head of cattle. That wouldn't be considered ranching but we kept them to sell the increase. When a cow was fresh we milked her while the calf was small but when it got larger we turned them out together and milked some of the others that had small calves. That way we had all we could use and we took care of the cows at the same time.

INDIAN NEIGHBORS.

There was an Indian and his wife who couldn't talk a word of English and we couldn't talk Creek so when they came to visit us there wasn't any talking. They would stay all day and just sit around until time to go home, then make a pointing motion toward their place which meant that they were going home. Once while they were at our house, the river came up. We had some little kittens and she wanted some of them. We gave a couple to her but when she started to cross the river she didn't

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want to get them nor her clothes wet. He didn't care but just waded out into the water. She tied the kittens in her apron and held them and her skirts on her head to keep them dry while she was wading across the river. Some of the Indians could talk a little English so we did a little talking when they paid us a visit. They all made good and quiet neighbors though.

INDIAN FISHING IN
NORTH CANADIAN RIVER.

The Indian men would go up the river and put some poison in the water. The women and children would be camped below. As the fish came down the river they would come to the top. If they got enough poison in the water the fish appeared to be dead but when put into ^{other} water they would revive. If they didn't get enough poison in the river, the fish would just act crazy. I've seen them so big that it would take three men to pull them out of the stream. The women would fry them and everyone would eat, even the little year-old baby was given fish just as if he were a grown person. One of my children would have died with a bone in his throat. This fish killing was

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between Fame and Eufaula, about four miles from Eufaula. .
They always gave us lots of fish when they had the killings.

INDIAN CHURCH.

In 1896 we lived on the Chief Rolla McIntosh farm and went to church at Fame. The Indians owned the church but they let the whites have one Sunday and they took the next. They came to our church and we visited them on their day. There was always an interpreter who translated for whichever was preaching. On the Indians' day the preacher was Indian and the interpreter told us whites what was said. On the Whites' day the preacher was white and the interpreter translated it into Creek.

The ministers were Uncle Johnnie McIntosh, Creek, and a Mr. Lyons, white. One of the deacons was Tom Ingram.

SCHOOL.

A Miss Squinton was a white teacher of a little district school for the Indians. She was a salaried teacher, that is she received her pay from the Creek Government. Every day she passed our house on the way to and from school so we sent two of our girls to school and paid her fifty cents a month for the privilege. There wasn't any white school for the children to go to.

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1898. HIGH WATER ON THE
NORTH CANADIAN.

We had lived on the George Scott place in 1897 but it was in the bottoms and was so unhealthy that we moved to Jim Crabtree's place. The house was on the hillside and before the year was over I was certainly glad that it was. A big washout came in May, 1898, and went from mountain to mountain and took everything with it. We were farming the bottom land and that was a complete loss. The people who lived in the bottoms had to come to the hills to be safe.

MAIL ROUTE.

Brush Hill was the oldest inland post office around there. The mail was brought from Eufaula to Brush Hill and later went on to Burney.

HENRYETTA. 1900.

~~In December of 1899 we moved to Henryetta from Brush~~
Hill. On our trip we passed only one house. That was the home of Joe Tiger on Tiger Mountain. He was a fullblood Indian but well above the average Indian. The country

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between Henryetta and Brush Hill was so mountainous which was the reason that it was so unpopulated. More people had settled on the other side of Brush Hill for the opposite reason; it wasn't so mountainous.

We farmed for Hugh Henry the year of 1900 and lived in a log house that was later located as being between Ninth and Tenth on the south side of Corporation Street but at that time it was just a farm. The only real house was owned by Hugh Henry himself. All the other people lived in tents - in fact, it was called a "rag town".

That spring on Easter Sunday, a storm came and blew every tent down. Some called it sleet but I would say that it hailed so hard that the ground was covered and hail stayed on the ground for weeks.

My husband, James, and his brother John bought the ground where the Blain theater is now but the titles were not good. They only got a contract which permitted them to build and do business on the ground and then if they were dissatisfied they could take the improvements wherever they desired. They sold that contract to another man for fifty dollars. I don't believe the titles were any good until after statehood but I'm not certain about it.

George F. Clark, O. W. Meacham and Lake Moore were the ones who surveyed, platted and started the town of Henryetta. Henry was also one of the railway townsite group that started Henryetta. His wife was an Indian and Shawnee was built on her land. Henryetta was being built on Hugh Henry's land and he was part Indian but considered "tough". Hugh Henry wanted Henryetta to be called "Henry City", but the Post Office Department wouldn't pass on that name. Henry Beard wanted it named Henryetta to honor himself, his wife, whose name was Etta, and Hugh Henry because it was on his ground. Neither of Hugh Henry's wives had the name of Etta, and his daughter is named "Hettie" so the name is really not for them at all.

DEWAR

In 1901 we moved to where the Dewar Pump Station was later built. There was one other white family named Davey Myres there; also one Indian family named Downing, a judge of the Creeks, and Mrs. Perryman had a house a mile south and there was another house where the Central Mines were later developed. There was no store in Dewar until in 1904 and Joe Marko owned that one. Then coal was found and the town started to building but as usual when they

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started building the town up, we moved farther out as we were farmers and needed the ground instead of the people.

1894. CROSSING THE
SOUTH CANADIAN RIVER.

There was a ford on the South Canadian at Purcell and a bunch of people were crossing it. They had gotten their wagons across and were driving the cattle and stock across, when a big head rise came up and over their stock before they could get them out. They were lucky to have their wagons and lives saved. I really believe that was the most dangerous river in the Territory. These rises would come up so fast that the river looked like it had a wall of water across the stream and traveling toward you.