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INDEX CARDS

Harris, Robert  
Cherokee Town  
Law enforcement--Federal  
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Field Workers Name Maurice R. Anderson

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This report made on (date) May 20 1937

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma  
Biography Form

1. Name  
Mr. Mrs. Miss Mr. Lem F. Blewett

2. Other name X

In the case of married woman or widow, give present name on line 1 (i.e. Mrs. John Doe) and maiden name on line 2 (i.e. Myrtle Smith). Indians usually have two (or more) names, a white man form of name, and a regular Indian name. Place Indian name on line 3.

3. Post Office Address Paris, Oklahoma

4. Residence address or location of home \_\_\_\_\_

5. Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 1871  
Month Day Year

6. Place of birth Indian Territory, Muskogean

7. This person is: (place circle around correct word) Male or Female

White, Negro, Full blood Indian, Mixed blood Indian,

Give Indian tribe Chickasaw

If possible, give degree of Indian in mixed bloods \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: (write out not essential. In case of mixed bloods show race, tribe, etc., of parents.)

8. Name of Father Lewis F. Blewett Place of birth X

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

9. Maiden name of Mother Josephine Place of birth Indian Territory

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTIONS: Write as plain as print. On line 1 indicate Mr. Mrs. or Miss by circle around correct word. When any of above questions cannot be answered, give reason, or check with # to show that question was not overlooked. Attach firmly to this page sheets containing notes or complete life narrative of person interviewed. Refer to manual for suggested subjects and questions.

Number of sheets attached 7

BLEVINS, LEM F. INTERVIEW.

Maurice r. Anderson,  
Field Worker.

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INTERVIEW WITH LEM F. BLEVINS  
Born 1871, the Chickasaw Nation on  
the Washita River near Ardmore.

My father was killed when I was two years old. He was part Cherokee Indian. My mother was the daughter of Jow Harris, who was a colonel in the Chickasaw Indian Regiment during the Civil War. Robert Harris, was her brother; he was at one time Governor of the Chickasaw Nation. After my father's death, my mother married Charley Stewart and my first remembrance to speak of was when we moved to Old Cherokee Town located on the Washita river, north of where Wynnewood, is now. There was a stage-stand, store and post office, a blacksmith shop, and a hotel. My step-father ran this hotel. Old Cherokee Town was headquarters for the U. S. Marshals. There was also a U. S. Commissioner's office. A man by the name of Kiser was the U. S. Commissioner and Heck Thomas, John Swane, Matt Cook, and Bob Nester were white U. S. Marshals. Bas Ree was a negro U. S. Marshal. I have heard Bas Ree say he took his U. S. Marshal's Commission just to get to kill Dick Glass and George Mack, both negroes. These two negroes were bad outlaws and they had caused the U. S. Marshals lots of trouble.

My first school to go to was at Old Chikikie. It was an Indian Mission school and Mary Hotchins was the teacher. It was located south and west of where Stratford, Oklahoma, is

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now, about seven miles east of Pauls Valley. This school was started in 1885. After the railroad came through Mary Hotchins started another school at Wynnewood; it was a Chickasaw Indian school. I boarded at Chikikie, but I did not board at this school; as my mother lived at Cherokee Town. I stayed at home until they moved most of Cherokee Town to Wynnewood. One building was sold to the Masonic Lodge, and they moved it to Pauls Valley.

My mother and step-father moved to Wynnewood. I herded cattle before I was fifteen years old and before I was eighteen I was working on the Johnson Ranch, known as the figure 8 brand. Montford Johnson was the owner. His range was from Johnsonville to Silver City. The main head quarters was at Silver City, located south of where Mine Oklahoma, is now, about five miles on Scherley Creek. I remember a fight between the Johnson cowboys and the Campbell cowboys in which one was killed. I didn't take part in the fight. I was with the chuck wagon at the time. I was nicknamed Vinegaroon by the first City Marshal at Norman.

At that time Norman was a city of tents and dugouts. The City Marshal's name was Tom Griffin. We had brought about a thousand head of cattle to Norman to ship them. Five or six cowboys and I were riding down the main street, or the wide

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place they called a street, and we met Tom Griffin, I was well acquainted with Tom, so I asked him what was the meanest thing on earth. He said, "I have been told it was a Vinegaroon", and from that day on I was called Vinegaroon.

After Old Oklahoma came in we were rounding up horses for the Johnson ranch and driving them to Silver City. We had lots of trouble with the new homesteaders. At that time they lived in tents, sod houses, and dugouts, and they would have small patches in cultivation and they would have these patches fenced with wire fence. We would round up a bunch of horses and start them west, and the fences were new to horses then. They didn't know what a barbwire fence would do to them, and on coming to some of these fences the horses would go right into them and down would go the fence and some of our horses would get out very badly and we would have sometimes a bad argument with the homesteaders. We could n't keep the horses out of the fences. When a bunch of high-strung horses once get started running nothing can stop them.

We would tell the homesteaders how sorry we were and we meant it for these homesteaders were having a hard time trying to make a home for their families without our horses <sup>running</sup> down their fences and running over their small patches of corn and ruining it.

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I have seen as high as fifty U. S. marshals at Old Cherokee Town at one time, and some of them were tough men. When they went after a man they got him. I have seen them come through there on their way to Fort Smith, Arkansas with forty or fifty prisoners. Some of the prisoners would be wounded and they would haul them in wagons and drive the ones that were able to walk in front of the wagons like cattle.

I have heard my step-father say that the old building that he used for a hotel was built sometime in the early fifties, and was used as a trading place for the Cherokee Indians. There are lots of old graves up and down the Washita River from where Old Cherokee Crossing was located. When I was a small boy, I have found human bones around the river bank. I have been told that there was a band of Mexicans and Indians camped on the Washita River north of where Old Cherokee Town was years before we moved there, and I think my step-father said we moved there in 1875. My step-father was a U. S. Deputy Marshal and an Indian policeman at Cherokee Town.

After the Santa Fe railroad was built through here, Montford Johnson moved about 25,000 head of his Durham and Hereford cattle and 500 saddle horses and about 1000 stock

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horses to the Cheyenne Country. I worked at his ranch at Silver City and Johnsonville. There is an Indian burial ground about seven miles east and a half mile south of Pauls Valley. When I was going to the Chikikie Mission school this Indian burial ground was a short way south of this school. Old settlers have said this burial ground was there as far back as they could remember about it.

I now live in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.