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ELEVINS, W. E.

INTERVIEW.

9471

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

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Field Worker's name Maurice R. AndersenThis report made on (date) December 16 1937

1. Name Mr. W. E. Blevins
2. Post Office Address Pauls Valley, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) _____
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 28 Year 1862
5. Place of birth Arkansas
6. Name of Father W. H. Blevins Place of birth Tennessee
7. Name of Mother Mary Bess Grisham Place of birth Tennessee
Other information about mother Deceased.

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 3.

BLEVINS, W. E.

INTERVIEW.

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Maurice R. Anderson
Investigator
December 16, 1937.

Interview with W. E. Blevins,
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

I was born 1862 in Arkansas and came to the Indian Territory in 1880 when I was only eighteen years old.

I had been raised on a cattle ranch in Arkansas as my father owned a large cattle ranch in the early days and always had from a thousand to fifteen hundred head of cattle on the ranch all the time. After I was old enough to ride a horse, I would help take cattle to the market. My father would drive cattle to Kansas crossing through the Indian Territory in the Choctaw Nation and west and north.

In the early days there were but a few cattle trails and most of the drives we made my father would have the men keep the cattle in the open country as best they could where there would be plenty of grass. I remember on one trip we were about forty days making the trip to Kansas and we hit a cattle trail after we crossed the Canadian River west of Johnsonville and went a little east I believe of where Norman is now; that was before there was any Oklahoma City.

In 1880 I came to where McAlester is now and went to work on Colonel McAlester's ranch. There was one store at McAlester and the post office was in this general store. Mr. McAlester owned this store and I believe he was also postmaster.

In those days it was no trouble to get a job on a ranch if you were a good cowhand and if you were a tender foot they would make a cowhand out of you in a short while.

I worked on the McAlester ranch three years and every week or so the Choctaw Indians would have a big stomp dance of some kind. The white people were always welcome, but I never did see any white people take part in the dances. I have gone to lots of their dances but never took part in any of them. There would be a big fire and the Indians would dance around this fire in a large circle singing and stomping. These dances usually lasted two or three days at a time.

The Indians then in that part of the country were very funny people, especially the full bloods. They didn't farm much, only raised four or five acres of corn and a few acres of cotton. The Indian women would do the farming and about all the men did was hunt and fish. At cotton gathering time

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as soon as the women picked a sack full they would put the sack of cotton on ~~an~~ mule or a pony and take it to the gin. The three years I worked on the McAlester ranch I never did see a Indian man working.

After the big fall round-up in 1883, I left the McAlester ranch and went back to Arkansas and lived in that state until 1905. At that time I came back to the Indian Territory and settled on a farm near Elmore City in the Chickasaw Nation and farmed around there for several years. I now live in Pauls Valley.