



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

6719

Field worker's name Nannie Lee BurnsThis report made on (date) July 16, 1937

1. This legend was  
 secured from (name) Julius Pinkey Killebrew

Address 3rd and G. N. E. Miami, OklahomaThis person is (male or ~~XXXXXX~~ ~~XXXXXX~~, ~~XXXXX~~, Indian,
If Indian, give tribe Cherokee2. Origin and history of legend or story Memory

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

KILLEBREW, JULIUS PINKEY

INTERVIEW

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Interview with Julius Pinkey Killebrew

By Nannie Lee Burns, Field Worker,

Indian-Pioneer History S-149

July 16, 1937.

#### KILLEBREW'S YARNS

My father was Thomas Jackson Killebrew, born in Tennessee. My mother was Plina Ridgeway of Cherokee descent, born in Kentucky. They were married in Weakly County, Tennessee. I was born May 27, 1835, in Weakly County, near Dresden. I had a brother, Lee, eighteen months older than I and six sisters.

When I was seven, my parents, driving an ox team hitched to a covered wagon, and accompanied by two young men, started west. At that time there were six of us children. We came as far as Salem, where the two men had a fight and got into trouble, and Father would not bring them farther.

One memory of the trip was the crossing of the Mississippi River. We crossed on a ferry, which was a flat boat pulled by ropes. I was afraid of the river.

The weather was warm and we camped along the way. We did not have roads and it was slow going.

We settled in what is now Boone County, Arkansas, near Harrison, where father built us a one room log house with a porch and shedroom.

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The next year we made a little crop where we had cleared the land. We had no very near neighbors and no schools, so we children helped and shared in all the work, and our greatest pleasures were hunting and trapping. We went barefooted and hoed the corn and chopped the cotton, made rails, raised some cattle and hogs and sheep on the range. The girls made the yarn and spun the cloth for our clothes, and for household use. Our hats were made at home of wheat straw.

We gathered the wild berries and fruits and at first dried them. I traded hides for a gun and soon became quite a hunter.

## CIVIL WAR DAYS.

My father was a Democrat and our house was burned at the beginning of the war. Father built another and when he finished it, he joined the army and his Captain was Dunlap and his General was Joe Shelby. I named one of my boys for Shelby.

My sister Em, who was the oldest and was now grown, would go with Wyatt Parrish and Colie Ann Porter to Forsyth,

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Missouri, forty-five miles away for supplies. They would be gone for a week on the trip but they always got back home, though Wyatt Parish was killed during the war.

We had parched wheat for coffee. We would pound up two or three ears of parched corn for meal, and use salt boiled from the dirt on the smoke house floor where the meat had dripped for seasoning. There was a buffalo salt lick near home but this did not make very good salt. Father came home once on a furlough and brought a half a bushel of salt with him and we were very stingy with the salt. While he was home he had to hide out on a hill above the house. When there was danger, mother would hang out a white cloth at the kitchen door.

Once Lee and I had gone to a mill about two miles from home when we were captured by the soldiers who had also taken a negro boy who was almost a man, and who had belonged to my Uncle Salt Buckley, my mother's sister's man. The soldiers offered me a Manhattan pistol if I would tell where the Democrats were. They handed me the pistol to see and hold and while I was looking at it the soldiers opened

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fire on the bunch that had us. Seeing our chance I ran, and my brother started too. The negro, seeing us going, started and outran us. We ran up the ditch and got away, and I was still carrying the pistol. I certainly felt brave carrying that gun. We, including the negro, reached our house safely. The next morning there was fight in the Horseshoe Bend, with Phoenix in command.

I kept my pistol hidden in a hollow log and wrapped in a quilt. I later traded my pistol for a rifle, and the soldiers would give me ammunition in return for venison.

At one time I had nine venison hams buried in the ashes in the smokehouse. I killed deer, wolves, turkeys, pigeons, and squirrels, but I didn't tackle the bears. The deer were not wild then and I have seen big bunches of them.

The soldiers would steal our quilts, and burn our rails and do much damage. Once they were in the house and one of them began throwing coals from the fire about the room to set the house on fire, and my sister, Em, hit him with a poker, and knocked him down. A part of the bunch

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in fact most of them, had already left, driving my steers off with them, but they were met by more soldiers, and in the fight that followed the steers got away and came home.

We made our soap from the lye drained off the ashes, which we stored in a wooden hopper. We used potash for soda, also made the corn into hominy by soaking it in the lye.

It was much worse than this depression. When the War was over I remember them singing;

"Old War first begun in 1861,

When the War quit in 1866,

They came home in a Hell of a fix."

#### SCHOOL DAYS

I started to school when I was fourteen in a log building, with a dirt floor, one window and sat on puncheon benches. It was a subscription school and Father paid the teacher, a man named Parrish, a dollar a month for us.

We had McGuffey's readers, the old Blueback Speller,

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arithmetic and writing. We stayed all day at school. We went early and didn't get home till dark and we would choose sides and have a spelling bee each Friday afternoon.

I played the fiddle for the dances which we had. During the summer I farmed, and in the fall went across the Boston Mountain, on the Arkansas River and picked cotton and helped father get out of debt.

Once I served on the grand jury for three months and thirteen days and while serving won a turkey dinner by dancing.

#### MARRIAGE

When I was almost twenty-five, or rather on January 6, 1878, I married Margaret Kathrine Abel, whose parents had come from Tennessee many years before.

Here Mrs. Killebrew said: My parents were Robert David Able and Rachael Able, nee Maynard, who had come to Arkansas before I was born.

The first home I remember was on Crooked Creek. I



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was born in Boone County, August 14, 1869. My parents went to Missouri and stayed three years during the War but I have never heard them tell of any troubles during that time.

My husband's folks moved to our settlement when I was nine or ten years old, he was the neighborhood out-up and I was very sober. He lived at his father's till August of the first year we were married and then we went to my father's where we stayed till the next January, then we moved to our own home.

#### THE NEW HOME

It was a two room log house and we had homemade furniture, tables, chairs and beds.

At home we had our first cookstove, just before I was married, but it was not till the second fall when we had a good cotton crop that my husband bought me a cook stove. At the same time he bought me a clock and feathers for a bed.

My father was a poor man but had a horse, a cow.

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and two sheep. I wove the cloth used in our home till two years after we were married when my eyes went bad, but it was not till our eldest child was eight years old that we had a sewing machine. It was a New Crown and my husband gave forty-five dollars for it, or rather he paid five dollars in money and gave a milk cow for the balance.

We had eight children and all except Marion Leslie are still living. In 1884, we moved to Westville and farmed a year then returned to Arkansas, and remained nine years. We then returned to the Indian Territory and lived at Moody Springs for five years, and from there moved to Tahlequah, where we remained till we moved to Miami at the beginning of the World War.

Mr. Killebrew said: "Mother was of the Cherokee Ridgeways and I had all the proofs necessary to prove our rights and started to do so but did not have quite enough money to finish, and when I asked my brother, who was well off, to loan me the money, he refused so I was compelled to drop it.

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"I was present when the Cherokees drew a big payment of \$700.00 to \$1000.00 each and saw the money stacked in rolls on the tables. Bob Ross was clerk.

"I knew Zeke Proctor well and was present when he killed some six or seven men in the court house. I fell down under a bench and stayed there when it happened and they thought he had killed me, too."