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

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Field Worker's name Ruth Kerbo.

This report made on (date) June 10 1937

1. Name Mr. Andrew La Casse

2. Post Office Address Mangum, Oklahoma Rt. 2

3. Residence address (or location) 16 1/2 miles southwest of Mangum.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 26 Year 1879

5. Place of birth Comanche County, Texas

6. Name of Father Frank La Casse Place of birth Canada.

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

7. Name of Mother Ellen Graves Place of birth Texas.

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 6 pages.

Ruth Kerbo,  
Field Worker.

An Interview With  
Andrew La Casse  
by  
Ruth Kerbo.

It was in 1887 when my parents came to Greer County. It was still a part of Texas, but we had heard of the free grass and that maybe some day it would be opened for settlement and we could get a home as we had no chance where we were.

We came from Comanche County, Texas, in two covered wagons, had our bedding and some supplies in the wagons.

We drove 150 head of cattle and thirty-five head of horses. We crossed Red River at Doan's Crossing. It cost twenty-five cents to cross on the straw. Then we followed the Old Mobeetie Trail for about forty or fifty miles northwest.

My father settled on a place nine miles east of Mangum. I was just a small boy but I remember quite well how our first home in Greer County looked.

My father and the hired boy who came with us dug a large hole in the ground about sixteen feet by twenty-four feet, deep enough for a tall person to walk around in without bumping his head. He cut cottonwood poles to make the roof. A large pole long enough to reach across the cellar length ways served as a ridge pole in the center and smaller poles were put crossways,

real close together and dirt piled on top. Our dugout never leaked either. The worst thing about living in a dugout was it being so dark. We had no windows and only one door.

We had no trouble keeping warm. Our greatest trouble was getting wood for a fire. We got some of our wood off the river where the dry wood had drifted. We grubbed some mesquite roots. Then we finally ventured over in the Kiowa Country and stole wood. Sometimes the Indians would catch us and we would have to pay off.

I went nearly everywhere my father did. I rode my horse and helped herd the cattle, also helped rope and brand them. We did not have many cattle but every body's cattle ran out and we had to brand them to keep from losing some. There were so many little cattle men who kept coming in the country with small herds. There were no fences anywhere.

These rivers have not always been boggy for I used to ride down the river bed hunting the cattle. They could be crossed anywhere the banks were not too steep.

After the free homestead law was passed and Greer County was opened for settlement, my father filed on the quarter section he settled on and bought a quarter section joining it.

He built his first house in 1893. It was a one room structure with a shed room on one side. The lumber was hauled from Vernon, Texas. We had a good well of water. Our corrals were made of cottonwood poles.

We got most of our supplies from Vernon. Sometimes it would take four days to make the trip, and especially if the weather was bad and the rivers got up. Mother hardly ever went to town. I remember one time mother went to town with dad and me on a load of wheat. We got thirty-five cents per bushel for the wheat. We always got groceries enough to last for six months at a time and we didn't go to town unless we had business.

Father raised a few cattle, and raised some wheat and feed for the stock.

The wheat was threshed with a thresher run by horse power. A pole was fastened to the machinery that threshed the wheat, two horses were hitched to the end of the pole and someone drove them around and round. The straw came out at one end of the thresher and two men stood there with pitch forks and threw it back out of the way.

Henry Thompson run a little store over near the mountains. We could get some things there such as crackers and cheese, some canned goods and ammunition

for most any size gun. These little trading posts were mainly for the cowboys to get a few supplies necessary to take on their camping trips while they were out on the range.

There was plenty of fish in Elk Creek. We would often go and seine and get fish enough to last for a week. We would take a large kettle and heat some water in it, put salt enough in it to make a strong brine and dip these fish in it after they had been cleaned and hang them up to dry. They would keep for several days.

Turkeys were also plentiful. We would kill three or four at a time. Antelope would roam around with the cattle. We hardly ever killed one. We didn't care for the meat and their hides were not worth anything. We always had plenty of beef, turkey and fish, really we had more meat to eat than anything else.

The first school I ever attended in Greer County was the Quartz school. This was a dugout similar to the one we lived in. Had boxing planks laid on sawed logs for seats. It was awfully dark. There were about twenty pupils. We studied McGuffey's Reader, Blueback Speller, and Arithmetic. We didn't have the different grades like the schools have now. In about 1892 a one room school house was built in place of the dugout. It

was made of boxing planks. Had windows in the sides and was lighter than the dugout but was awfully cold. We used the same kind of seats until later, don't remember the date, a nicer building was erected. Don't know just how long this building was used but finally the Quartz School was consolidated with other districts and the Quartz School building was torn down. We had to walk ~~three~~ <sup>and</sup> miles to school. It was located ten miles east/two and a half miles north of Mangum.

There were some Kiowa Indians over near Mission Springs. They never tried to harm us, but would beg for tobacco or anything they saw that they wanted.

Old Chief Loudtalk and his son Hope eye, who was also a loud talker, hung around us a lot. Sometimes they would come and camp near our home. They received their commodities issued to them by the government at Henry Thompson's store and when the time came for them to receive their goods they would come to the store and camp. Sometimes they would stay three or four days or until they had gotten rid of everything they received. They liked to play monte, a gambling game, and the white men who played with them nearly always won. If the white man won the Indians horse he would take it and get away quickly or the Indian wouldn't let him have it.

After I grew up I began working for a man who had a small herd of cattle, maybe two-hundred. Along in the

summer his cattle began to die with some kind of fever. There was no veterinary in the country anywhere and we had tried every remedy we had ever heard of to save the cattle with no success. We saw they were all going to die so I decided I would experiment with them. I took some Shumach berries and boiled them to make a tea and to each quart of tea I put two tablespoonfuls of salt and gave it to the sick cattle. They began to get better and we never lost any more after we tried this remedy.