

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

MERIMON, LARKIN V. SECOND INTERVIEW

10042

Field worker's name Robert H. Boatman

This report made on (date) February 14 1938

1. This legend was secured from (name) Larkin V. Merimon

Address Route 2, Blanchard, Oklahoma

This person is (male or ~~female~~) White, ~~Negro~~, ~~Indian~~

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story _____

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 4

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Robert H. Boatman,
Investigator,
February 14, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. Larkin V. Merimon,
Blanchard, Oklahoma.

I was born July 23, 1871, in Arkansas and I came to the Territory at an early date, settling in the Chickasaw Nation at what was known as "Old Darty."

At this time horse thieves and outlaws were very numerous throughout the central and southern parts of the Territory and many good horses were stolen and run into Texas, where they were rebranded and sold or taken on across the border into Mexico.

It came to the attention of the law-abiding settlers that they must, in order to protect their welfare, both present and future, blot from existence this organization of law resisting renegades.

Thus in order to assure themselves of protection against such invasions the Anti-Horse Thief Association was organized with headquarters at Ardmore. There were branch offices anywhere from twenty-five to fifty miles each direction that worked in cooperation with the original

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headquarters. The aim of this organization was to do away with horse thieving; they had special riders to hunt for stolen goods.

In order to join this group \$1.00 was required as membership fee and an assessment of 50 cents per month; this money was used to pay the salaries of the hired riders. Each rider was pledged to his duties and promised to cooperate to the best advantage of the Association.

I became a rider for the association located at Darty and I rode and worked for this association for two years. This association adopted a brand (U.S. branded on the hoof at the edge of the hair on the right foot) and every member of the association had this brand on their horses.

As a rider for the organization I was given the right to carry a gun and there was no limited distance as to hunting for stolen stock. When stock was stolen in one district, its riders notified other riders of other post by postal cards or letters so they would be on the lookout for the thieves.

I was sometimes absent from my post for two weeks,

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meanwhile riding perhaps a hundred miles looking for stolen stock. I was given written authority to investigate any suspicious goods. On finding a group ^{about which} of horses there was doubt I showed the supposed owner my written authority and investigated the stock. If they had the U.S. brand on them the man in possession of such stock was asked to account for his getting and having them. If he produced proof satisfactorily that they were honestly his it was all right; otherwise the rider took over the horses and notified the owner of the stolen stock and a Federal Man. If the owner identified the horses as his the officer escorted the thief to jail where he was tried for horse thievery.

The office of Darty was once notified that a team of bay horses had been stolen from near Lexington and were on route to Sherman, Texas. I, being an experienced rider, took up the supposed trail of the horse thief and after two or three days riding, came upon a man with the two horses near Red River. Upon demand of explanation of his possession the man turned the horses over to me, claiming he had picked them up as strays. I delivered

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the horses to the bar-o-bar (-o-) ranch near Madill, which was owned by John Watson and the owner recovered his horses from this ranch after paying a fee of \$20.⁰⁰ for same to me.

This association continued in existence for several years and was one of the most helpful organizations known in regard to combating outlawry and horse thievery in Indian Territory. I fully believe this has been one of the most important factors in the upbuilding and modeling of our present respect for law-abiding citizenship.