

LONG, EMMA.

INTERVIEW

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

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Field worker's name Mannie Lee Burns

This report made on (date) February 19 1930

1. This legend was secured from (name) Mrs. Emma Long

Address 11 E. SW Miami, Oklahoma

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

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story From 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 8

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Nannie Lee Burns,
Investigator,
February 19, 1938.

An Interview with Mrs. Emma Long,
11 F SW, Miami, Oklahoma.

W. J. (Jack) Long was born in Canada, October 5, 1852, and came to the United States when thirteen years of age. Drifting westward with the opportunity to be a pioneer in the undeveloped country, he finally settled at Osage Mission in Kansas. Here he married and after his wife died here he continued to follow in the wake of the new settlements interested in the cattle business.

It was when he was operating on the edge of the territory with headquarters at Chetopa, Kansas, the border town, that I first met him. Later, he transferred his operations to the Indian country with headquarters at Welch, where we became engaged.

The Home of Sycamore.

He was buying and grazing cattle and this, of course, gave him an excellent opportunity to see the country and in all that he saw the beautiful, clear, spring-fed Sycamore appealed to him most. For a very small sum he purchased

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the eighty acres where the home buildings stood and moved to it with his sons by the former marriage in April, 1896.

We were married the following month and when I came there to live we had only a one-room log house which in the last years we lived there we used as a smoke-house.

Still interested in stock, my husband began to buy as he could either a cow, a mule or a hog. Another unusual thing with him, he always paid cash for what he bought, though he would sell to one who needed the animal or the land on most any terms or payments or take in payment any stock that the purchaser could spare. As he could afford it and the opportunity offered he added to our home here until at the time of his death, in September, 1932, we owned over eleven hundred acres of land there and held a long-time lease on several hundred acres more.

With increased facilities, the size of our herds of cattle, mules and hogs increased and they have at times run into the hundreds. He always drove the animals to Seneca, Missouri, to sell or ship to market.

My husband also began to turn his attention to farming

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and the fertile valley along the Sycamore were either planted in corn or grain or sown to alfalfa. So with the coming of the cold season the three large alfalfa barns were full. Here in these well-watered valleys we were always sure of crop returns.

In the later years the clear cold water attracted many picnickers and on Sunday we were seldom alone. Later we built a comfortable five-room house in the yard in front of the old log one which was ceiled instead of plastered and the walls were covered with an oil preparation which my husband preferred.

As our acreage increased, we built several tenant houses for our help. Of course, all was not sunshine here in our hills for in some of the obscure spots the unscrupulous would occasionally set up a moonshine still and later when the owner would be arrested the woman would most likely come to my husband, Uncle Jack, as he was called, and ask for help. I have never known him refuse to help any woman, though, at times, he couldn't agree with her.

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We lived on Sycamore about four miles south of Wyandotte and the roads were so poor that we were proud when the Number 10 Highway was built south through our holdings.

Turkey Island

Turkey Island was one of the lovely spots that was coveted by my husband and so in 1918 he purchased it from the Lewis L. Northrup and as long as he lived looked forward to building a summer home on the island. Most people have become familiar with the early history of this island through the notoriety of the court proceedings between Mr. Englebright and Mr. Elliott who purchased from the estate after my husband's death for less than a \$100.00 the tract that he had paid \$600.00 for at the time of his purchase.

This land was probably included in the grant to the Cherokees, which, I think, was in 1828 and later when the Cherokees deeded to the Senecas on the north end of the Cherokee Nation along the Missouri State Line a tract of land fifteen miles from east to west and about seven miles from north to south.

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Later, if I recall it was in 1832, by another treaty the Senecas and the Shawnees were restricted to the land on the east side of the Neosho or Grand River. When the Senecas sold their surplus lands to John Bayless of Barry County, Missouri, he in turn, with other lands, sold it to Lewis Northup from whom Mr. Long purchased it in 1918.

At the time that we came in possession of it, this land was covered with timber and I have grown very familiar with it as I have gone with my husband on many trips there after wood when we were clearing and shaping as we would want it in later years. This land is said to have obtained its name from the great flocks of wild turkeys that used to frequent it and especially after so great a number was killed there on a big turkey drive. Its out-of-the-way location made it a favorite location for fisherman, as it was always surrounded by the water of Grand River on all sides. Never have I seen this fail except in one big drought when for a time you could reach the island dry footed in one place.

At one time this island was the site of a territorial

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murder but I do not remember enough of it to mention it. I do remember that it was the year before Mr. Long's death that he received a letter mentioning it and from the contents of the letter as I remember it the case was tried in a United States Court, but I do not remember where.

Several people have lived on the island temporarily but never at any time has there been more than a rude two-room house there. Because of the deepness of the water surrounding the island we had most of it fenced to protect the stock that we kept there occasionally, for usually the island stands five and six feet out of the water. As we cleared the island it became apparent that there was a valuable gravel bar there and up to this time our title had never been questioned.

The Cherokee land owner on the west side of the river then made a contract with one of the county commissioners to supply them with gravel from this island and wrote to the Department of Interior and told them that we were claiming and holding possession of the land unlawfully. My husband

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received a very saucy letter from them demanding to know by what right he held the island and to surrender the possession of it to Mr. Englebright. He replied and he received a nice letter of apology from them. After that he began a suit to recover the eleven-hundred dollars that already been paid for the gravel taken from the island. But his death intervened and when Mr. James Elliott purchased the island from the estate, he inherited the suit and, of course, I was drawn into the suit as the principal witness to establish our ownership to the island.

The decision here was in favor of Mr. Englebright but when Mr. Elliott appealed it to the State Supreme Court the decision was reversed in his favor and only last month, District Judge A.V. Coppage ordered the decision of the Supreme Court to be recorded here on the County records giving Mr. Elliott a clear title.

Turkey Island, the only island of any size in the Grand or Neosho Rivers, lies about seven miles southeast of Fairland near the Bee Creek Bridge and contains between forty and fifty acres of land. It would have made a lovely

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home, for the land and the gravel bar which caused the dissension is not its only value. Last year eight acres of it was planted in corn and averaged fifty bushels per acre.

My husband's vision of a home on the island will never be realized by any one as this land will be blotted from existence with the completion and the flooding of the Grand River Dam in the next few years.

After my husband's death I moved to a small project just south of Wyandotte. But our only son lived here in Miami and only last summer I rented my home there and came to Miami to live.