

WARLAUMONT, JIM

INTERVIEW

#8771

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

Field Worker's name Augusta H. Custer

This report made on (date) Sept. 22, 1937 1937

1. Name Jim Warlaumont

2. Post Office Address Geary, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) One and a half miles west.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 18 Year 1865

5. Place of birth Ohio

6. Name of Father James Warlaumont Place of birth France

Other information about father Has been dead many years.

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth France

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to label for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____.

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Interview with Jim Warleumont
Geary, Oklahoma

I left Ohio when I was fifteen years old and came on horseback to Oklahoma. I was three months on the road. I stopped and worked any place where I could get work and let my horse rest. I carried a sleeping bag made of canvas and lined with cow-hide with the hair on. This was a protection from wind, rain, insects, and the cold. I did not need anything else but a blanket. That was sixty-two years ago.

When I arrived in Oklahoma I got work with Davis, Baker and Cufelt, who were cattle men. They had headquarters at Red Moon somewhere near Arapaho. I do not think that I could find the location now. This cattle company ran from twelve to fifteen thousand head of cattle. I worked at branding the cattle in the fall and I rode the range all the time. The Indians were pretty bad to steal cattle for beef and once in a while when one got too bold some cow

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puncher would take a shot at a buck and kill him.

The cattle were of the longhorned Texas type, and at the general roundup in the fall all mavericks were divided and branded. Some cows weaned their calves earlier than others and it would be impossible to tell which cow owned the calf. These were called mavericks and divided among the cattlemen.

Drouths in Oklahoma are nothing new for there was a time when there was no rain for five years; this five years' drouth lasted from the year 1877 to 1882; water holes dried up and streams were either dry or low. I have beaten the cattle off with a club many a time when we were cutting cotton wood trees for the cattle to eat the leaves. Some cattle died of starvation. There were places and some years when the grass in the sloughs was as high as a horse's back. But this was coarse grass and when it was dead in the fall the stock would not eat it as it was too coarse.

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The Indians would set this coarse, dead grass on fire and burn off the whole country up and down the creeks. They would back-fire so that the grass on the prairies would be protected.

There was much game especially Mexican blue tail quail. The Bob Whites came in later with the planting of crops. Prairie chickens were plentiful as were antelope and there were some deer. I do not know why there were no pheasants here as there were in Montana.

I have made many trips to Montana with two to three hundred head of cows and heifers. The northern men did not like the long horns but they would get low on cattle and buy the females and then build up the herd.

One time I had charge of a bunch of these cattle which we were moving and at night it was my duty to tell each herder when it was his turn to watch the herd. Each herder would watch about three hours a night. One morning when I took charge of the herd

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and counted the bunch, there were about twenty-five missing head of cattle. I called the men up and asked which one of them had let the cows get away. No one answered. Then I went down the bunch and asked them as individuals and one said, "Well I could not help it; two men came and said that they were sent to get them and they were going to take them." I said "Well, I am going after them."

They told me that this man who had sent his men after the cows was known in that part of the country as a bad man. But I went down to the cattle ranch and there were our cows and no others with them; two men were guarding our cows when I came up and asked what I wanted; I said "I want those cows that you stole from my herd." They said I had better not try to take them and then the boss of the ranch came out of the house. He asked me the same thing and I said, "I came for the cows that you stole."

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He started to reach for his gun two or three times but I looked him straight in the face. He got white as cotton, and I sat with my hands crossed on the horn of my saddle but I was quick on the reach in those days and he knew that I meant business when I went to his ranch and told him that I knew he had stolen my cattle. He turned and walked off and I drove the cows back to the herd and we went on.

It would take all summer to drive a bunch of cows through to Montana. It was slow traveling; about twelve miles a day, but coming back would be only a short trip of about three weeks.

The cattle men in the Caddo country built little log cabins for the cow-boys to winter in. These were warm and each had a fire place built of mud and stones.

We had one awful storm about 1875 or 1880, when there was a regular Dakota snow storm or blizzard. It lasted two or three days and every one who was not protected, was frozen. Cattle had their hoofs

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and ears frozen off and many thin cattle perished. The deer and antelope suffered as greatly as the cattle and we found many cripples after the temperature warmed up. I have never seen anything like that since. The snow was as fine as flour and I don't know how far below zero the temperature went.

There was plenty of fish in the rivers and streams when it was not too dry.

I have helped to cut eight bee trees in my life and I have never robbed the bees of all their honey. I used to make hives and tame the bees and I had seventy-two bee hives at one time, but these dry seasons would come and finally I sold my bees for anything that I could get for them. I could not afford to feed them when there were no flowers for them to eat.

When we were traveling around with the chuck wagons we sometimes needed a light at night and we made this dim light by taking a tin can and pounding it full of small holes with a nail or some sharp instrument as an awl. Then we placed a candle inside

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and this gave some light. There were no lanterns in the very early days.

In the cabins we always had candles for a light when we had to have a light, but as we were seldom sick, and were tired out with being out of doors all day we went to bed as soon as it was dark. The light from the fireplace was usually sufficient.

We could get our clothing from the commissary that each cattle ranch had. These commissaries supplied the cowboys with necessities.

We did not need medicine often and we learned from the Indians, that mule tail is good for diarrhoea and another weed I do not know the name, will cure a cold, and lobelis is good for fever. These three remedies were about all that we needed.

In the early days there was an unwritten law in Indian Territory that no man should ask another man his name, nor the name of the place he came from.

Every man carried a six-shooter in the early days and many times the man who was quickest on the trigger was the one who lived and the only law which prevailed was the law of the survival of the fittest.