

WENDELL, JIM.

INTERVIEW

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

WENDELL, JIM - INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson

This report made on (date) March 30 1938

1. Name Jim Wendell

2. Post Office Address Paoli, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1863

5. Place of birth Texas

6. Name of Father John Wendell Place of birth Texas

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Nancy Lawrence 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 7.

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Anderson, Maurice R.- Investigator.
Indian Pioneer History - S-149.
March 30, 1938.

Interview with Jim Wendell
Paoli, Oklahoma.

I was born in 1863 in Texas and grew up in that state on my father's ranch. I learned to ride wild broncs and by the time I was nine years old, I was spoken of by the cowboys as being one of the best riders that ever rode a bronc.

My father had saved the life of a Half-blood Comanche whom he had found out on the range one day with a bullet through him. He brought the Indian to our ranch and took care of him until he was well, which took about two months. After the Indian was well again he wanted to stay with my father and he did stay until he was killed, several years later, and was buried behind the old corral fence. We never learned his name; we just called him "Comanche". He taught me to ride; his job on the ranch was to keep on the watch-out for the Indians, who would make raids on the ranches and, believe me, he was a master at following a trail or tracking down horses.

After I learned to ride, I have gone on many a trip with Comanche but he would always tell me, "If there is to

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be trouble you make it for home as fast as you can go". However, we never had a shooting scrape while I was with him, but we have been away from home two or three days at a time, and on each trip I went with him we brought back the horses that had been stolen, except one time about ten head of Father's horses were stolen one night. The next morning I went with Comanche to look for them and he tracked the horses to where they had crossed Red River into the Indian Territory. This was the only time I ever knew Comanche to quit a trail.

Comanche was killed in a gun fight by some horse thieves, when I was only about twelve or thirteen years old. Comanche has many a time said to me, "Jimmy, you are going to a new country some day and become one of the best riders that anyone ever heard of". I would laugh at him and tell him I would get on a bronc someday that would break my neck. "Not if you ride like Comanche", he would say.

My father nearly went broke on the old ranch, so in 1881 we sold out and moved to Beef Creek, now Maysville, and my father went to farming and I went to work for Dave Mays who was a large cattle owner.

We would take a bunch of horses to Arkansas and trade

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them for cattle. Sometimes we would have two to three hundred head of cattle to drive back, and the trail we would follow was the stage line from Caddo to Fort Sill. I remember we would cross the Washita River at Cherokee Town. Then there was only a rock ford crossing there, and one store, a stage stop, blacksmith shop and a two-story log house which, I believe, was called a hotel. We never did camp there, only passed by and, as I was helping drive a bunch of cattle, I didn't have much time to look around.

In the early days before coming to the Indian Territory, I have helped drive cattle over the old Chisholm Trail which crossed through the Indian Territory about where Duncan and Marlow are now located, on through just west of Rush Springs, and connected with the Dodge City trail about the line of Kansas. The Dodge City trail and the Goodnight trail crossed the Indian Territory on west of Fort Sill. I remember helping drive a bunch of cattle over the Dodge City trail and we crossed the Canadian River near Cloud Chief.

Bill Stone owned a large ranch on Wild Horse Creek in the southwest part of now Garvin County, and Jack Florence owned the Three Stripe ranch on Mud Creek. John Worley was

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an early-day rancher, as was Noah Lael who lived near Cherokee Town. Lael's brand was the three cross and a figure five. Dave Mays brand was W.S. on the left side of his cattle, and the Bar Buckle on the left side of his horses.

I have ridden broncs for all the men whose names I have mentioned. At the time I worked for Noah Lael he had a negro working for him whose name was Link and he was the best negro bronc rider in the Indian Territory. Link was out riding for cattle one day and there had been an awfully big rain and Sandy Creek was bank full. Link drove his horse off into the creek, trying to get across on his way back home and he and his horse both were drowned.

I went to make the run in 1889. I crossed the Canadian River northeast of Wayne, but when the signal was given to start, I never even tried to get a place.

There were lots of deer, turkey and wild game in this part of the country when I came here. I have killed deer and turkey right where Pauls Valley is now located. Then, there was only a store at Paul's Valley and it was located about a mile south of the present townsite.

I made the run in the opening of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian country. I was working for John Vant who had

the Government contract to furnish beef to the Indians at Fort Sill.

Before the opening of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Country it was very funny to watch these Indians when we would take a bunch of steers over to them. The Indian men would do the killing and as soon as they would kill their steer, they would go back to the tepee and the Indian squaw would get the horse and hook the horse to a sled of some kind and she would drag the steer to the tepee and skin it and hang the meat up on a long pole right out in the sun. The Indian men wouldn't help at all.

I was born on a ranch in Texas and I have always lived on a ranch, and in my young days, after coming to the Indian Territory, I have been counted as one of the best bronc riders in the Indian Territory.

I am now seventy-five years old and I have been riding broncs ever since I was nine years old. I now work for Mr. C.C. Bexton on his small ranch about four miles north of Paoli. Mr. Bexton also owns the Horse Shoe ranch in the southeast part of the state on Little Blue River. My job here on the ranch is to break young horses.