

WHITE, LAVILLA.

INTERVIEW

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

WHITE, LAVILLA

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Field Worker's name Zaidee B. Bland

This report made on (date) January 13, 1938 1938

1. Name Mrs. Lavilla White

2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 601 N Spurgeon Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 30 Year 1886

5. Place of birth Texas

6. Name of Father R. W. Briscoe. Place of birth Texas

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Clara Highton 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.

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Zaidee B. Bland,
Journalist,
January 13, 1938.

"An Interview with Lavilla White,
Altus, Oklahoma.

When I was just past two years old Mother and Dad decided to come north to Greer County and take up land for a home. Father, accordingly, sold everything except what could be loaded into a covered wagon and headed north. We camped every night in the open. It was the fall of the year. We had what was called an open fall but even then it was cold. I cannot remember much about it except the cold. Of course I have heard Mother and Dad talk about it lots of times. There were two mules hitched to the wagon and lead rope behind the wagon.

All streams had to be forded and there was a lot of deep sand for the mules to pull. These mules were not very large and one of them was blind in one eye.

Only two miles from where we crossed the river at Doan 's Crossing, November 6, 1888, Pap. stopped and we camped for the night. He later filed on this very quarter of land and owns it to this day. A half dugout was arranged for the family, a

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shed or wind break for the mules, a well was dug, and wild cows lured into a corral for milking. We did not bring much food with us but there was abundance of wild life - rabbits, birds of all kind and the creeks were full of fish. Mother worked side by side with Dad in making all this home.

There was no fuel so we had to have "Prairie Coal". We small children could pick this up faster than a grown person for we were more active and did not have so far to bend.

I have often heard Mother say when we got here Daddy had only \$160.00 in cash and it was the dead of winter before the hole in the ground was ready for us to move into. How warm it did feel that first night under the ground. You could not hear the cold north wind howl at all nor the wolves barking at the moon. Coyotes howling to the moon make the wierdest, lonest, creepiest noise in the world to me. I do not like to hear them yet, as we often do when we spend the night on the farm.

Papa was not long in building us one room above the ground and we had the only room above the ground between Navajo and Vernon for many years.

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It did not take long for that \$160.00 to melt away and Daddy looked around for some way to make a little money. The whole earth was covered with the bleached bones of buffalo where they had been slaughtered years before for their hides and left for the wolves and buzzards to eat. I do not know what bones were worth but they brought ready cash at Vernon. Daddy, Mother and we children would go out and pick up enough bones to fill the wagon bed, all the mules could pull. Daddy would haul them into Vernon and get us the things we needed. He could never make this trip in one day. This was a sure, and about the easiest way of obtaining money in the early day, so Daddy formed the habit, when we needed anything, of just loading the wagon with bones and going to Vernon after it. Any time of the year was bone time and Daddy hauled so many bones to Vernon for sale that some of the merchants gave him the name of "Bones" and some of the old timers call him "Bones" to this day, although we did not like the nick-name a little bit.

Lots of times Daddy would take the family with him to

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Vernon and we would stay in the wagonyard for a day or two until Daddy got his business all attended to. It was a rather common experience to get stuck in Red River in the quicksand and have to be carried out one at a time on a horse, the wagon was then unloaded and pulled out. There were always a lot of kind people around Doan's Crossing to help a fellow who got stuck in the sand and no one ever thought of offering money or expecting it for such service. Everyone was welcome to share one's roof and food who came our way. Mother and Dad reared nine children and the girls worked side by side in the fields with the boys, just as Mother did with Dad.

School

By the time I was old enough to go to school there was a dugout fixed for a school room right in the forks of the creeks where Deep Red Run empties into Red River. This school was named South Greer and school was taught here many years. There was not much room for games- the one I remember most was called "Town Ball" and girls, boys, teacher

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and all played together. Flower hunting was enjoyed by the smaller children very much. I remember best the wild daisies. They were so beautiful, both blue and white, with their yellow centers. We made daisy chains and crowns and wreaths out of them and sometimes took up the whole plant to carry home for the yard.

Indians

The Indian Trail to Vernon led right by our house but the Indians seldom stopped. When they did it was because they were hungry, and mother always fed them. She never wanted to anger them in any way and never did for they were always friendly.

Dangers

For us children there were only the wild cattle to be feared. We went so constantly with Daddy and Mother everywhere there was not much danger of our getting lost or into the river to be drowned. The cattle were a real menace, especially in Heel Fly time, for the cattle would come by the dugout on a full run headed for the water to get rid of the flies.

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There was one man who brought in blooded bulls for crossing with the range cattle and we learned early to call all real large cattle "Kirby's Bulls". Once when the cattle were running by the place full tilt, one of the little girls of the family came running to the door exclaiming- "Goodness, gracious, mighty, let me in this house quick, Kirby's Bulls are coming".

I do not remember that we were ever afraid of the snakes much. We were close to the river and did not see a great many like the people did nearer the rocks.