

MELVIN, ELIZABETH

INTERVIEW

#9343

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

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Field worker's name Robert H. Boatman

This report made on (date) November 22 1957

1. This legend was secured from (name) Elizabeth Melvin

Address Wayne, Oklahoma

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,  
If Indian, give tribe \_\_\_\_\_

2. Origin and history of legend or story \_\_\_\_\_

Development of Wayne.

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

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Robert H. Boatman,  
Investigator,  
November 22, 1937.

An Interview with Elizabeth Melvin,  
Wayne, Oklahoma.

I was born in Mississippi, July 4, 1867, though I left Mississippi at a very early age with my parents, moving West. About all I remember of the trip was the great steamboats on which we traveled.

When first we came to the Territory there were few people here; there were no permanent homes; only small shacks and log pens or cabins.

People just lived in cabins, tents, dugouts and wagons and when my parents both died I was left homeless with no relation. There were no orphan homes so I grew up as best I could manage until at the age of thirteen years I was married to a Mr. N. K. May who had been educated for the practice of law, though at that time he was engaged in the business of the farming of wheat and corn.

We settled in the Chickasaw Nation near the place where the town of Wayne now is located and here we took up practical farming. Then in a few short years again

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Death came, this time taking my husband; leaving me alone again. About this time the building of the railroad of the Santa Fe was in progress. So I took what savings had been accumulated and built a house consisting of two stories; then it was known as a hotel; this was the beginning of the town of Wayne.

Soon it was known that a townsite was to be laid out. I set out with every energy possible to help build the town and everything was progressing nicely when the town was practically destroyed by fire, leaving only my hotel and one store. Again the town began to be built and soon brick and stone buildings were erected, a depot and churches and schools were established and homes were built, until today we have a very beautiful and thriving town of some 800 population located six miles south of the town of Purcell on United States Highway 277.

I now live at my home in the town of Wayne in the same house in which I first lived.