

~~HUDSPETH, DORA LEDBETTER.~~

INTERVIEW

19591

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

HUDSPETH, DORA LEDBETTER INTERVIEW 10591

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt

This report made on (date) April 20 1938

1. Name Mrs. Dora Ledbetter Hudspeth

2. Post Office Address Hobart, Kiowa County

3. Residence address (or location) Hobart, Oklahoma

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 27 Year 1881

5. Place of birth Georgia

6. Name of Father Charles Ledbetter Place of birth Georgia

Confederate Soldier of Civil War.
7. Name of Mother Dela Wood Ledbetter Place of birth North Carolina

Other information about mother Typical Pioneer 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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Ethel B. Tackitt,
Investigator,
April 20, 1938.

An Interview with Mrs. Dora Ledbetter Hudspeth,
Hobart, Oklahoma.

I was born in Georgia, October 27, 1881; my father, Charles D. Ledbetter, was also a native of Georgia and had served as a Confederate Soldier through the Civil War in which he was twice wounded. My mother, Dela M. Wood Ledbetter, was a native of North Carolina. My parents moved their family to Texas from Georgia and from there to the Chickasaw Indian territory in 1889, where they leased land from the Indians at Ryan near Terral, now Jefferson County.

My father farmed some but also owned stock which ran at large as there were not many white people in that part of the country then and great numbers of cattle roved over the prairies. Our home was about eight miles from the Red River bottom and not in the large timber.

Near our place also passed what was then called the Texas end of the Chisholm Cattle Trail, but in these days I often hear persons dispute this fact as they say the Chisholm Trail only reached to Anadarko, but be that as it

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may, thousands of head of cattle were driven over this trail every year and I have seen herds pass for twenty-four hours at a time without a stop. Some of these cattle were being driven to Dodge City and to other points in Kansas to be shipped to the Northern markets while other great herds were being moved from Texas to the Cherokee Strip, to the Osage Indian lands, and to many other places in the Indian Territory for pasture. Everything was kept out of the path of these cattle as the great moving body trudged along and they were viewed from a safe distance as all persons were then aware of the danger in these herds becoming frightened as they would trample each other, anything or anybody to death if stampeded.

The drifting cattle were also sources of great worry to the settlers in those days and a person seldom ventured far from protection on foot as the wild cattle would chase a dog or a person on foot and when one steer started after an object the whole herd would follow and trample even a horse to death if it should happen to fall down.

These great drifting herds usually came before a

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Norther in the Fall of the year as they were going before the wind to make their way to the high grass and the shelter of the river brakes. The force of these mighty herds was so great that they crashed through fences of all kinds, tore down haystacks and cow lots, even piling one over another off the high bluffs and being killed in great numbers.

We children were always cautioned to watch out for the wild cattle no matter where or how we went any place and when the weather looked as though a Norther would roll up we were never permitted to venture away from the house, even to attend the little subscription school a few miles away to which we went on horseback.

I remember an experience which I suffered when I was about thirteen years old. My parents went to town and I remained at home and was to feed some calves down at the haystack. Before Mother started she reminded me to watch out for wild cattle when I went down there and I did look but not so very carefully for out of a gulley near by came a large bull that had seen me go the haystack. I climbed up on top of it and he bellowed and pawed the earth giving

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forth every indication that he would like nothing better than to trample and gore me to death. I sat up on the haystack and waited for the bull to become tired and go away but he did nothing of the kind. He kept close watch on me and I knew better than to get off the haystack but I feared that I might fall off from fright. This continued for four, long tiresome hours until at last my brother came home and saw me on the haystack, There was no way of getting rid of an angry animal like this, so after the usual custom of the country at that time, my brother shot and killed the bull. There were a great many wild animals such as panthers, wild cats and cougars, in the timbered places but the wolves on the prairie were the greatest nuisances. The coyotes bothered little else but small calves and poultry but the large wolves called by everybody then "Loafers" were very much dreaded, not only because they killed calves, colts and often grown stock, but quite often they would attack persons. This is another fact which is now sometimes disputed but I know it to be the truth for my brother was, one morning about three o'clock, returning home on foot from sitting up with a sick neighbor when he discovered that he was being followed by loafer wolves. He

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hastened and they gave chase, four in all, and as he did not have his gun, he was forced to take refuge in the first tree he came to that was tall enough to take him out of springing distance of the determined pack. He sat up in the tree thinking that the wolves would go away but they did not leave the place until the sun was well up. Then my brother got down and came home, most positive that loafer wolves would attack human beings.

After the Washita country opened for white settlement in 1892, my parents moved there and Father filed on a claim five and one half miles south of Boss. We came in covered wagons, driving our stock through the Comanche, Kiowa and Apache Reservation and over the route that is now a highway through the Wichita-Mountain Forest Preserve. It was then only an Indian trail and wagon tracks.

We never feared the Indians as my people were always on good terms with the Chickasaws, Choctaws, Comanches and Kiowas, but when we were passing through the Apache Reservation we were warned that Geronimo's hate for the white people was such that many heads of stock had been killed by the

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Apache Indians poisoning the water in Medicine Bluff
Creek.

We lost no stock because our stock was not permitted
to drink of the water in Medicine Bluff Creek. Fort Sill
and all of the now beautiful park was then a native wilder-
ness. I have married and reared my family in Oklahoma as
my parents also reared theirs and we have taken our place
in building the common wealth.