

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

97

MONROE, WILLIS SIDNEY

INTERVIEW

10305

Field worker's name

Louise S. Barnes,

This report made on (date)

March 14,

193

8

1. This legend was
secured from (name)

Willis Sidney Monroe

Address

Kingfisher, Oklahoma

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

XXXXXX XXXXX

XXXXX

If Indian, give tribe

2. Origin and history of legend or story

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

MCNROE, WILLIS SIDNEY

INTERVIEW

10505

Louise S. Barnes,
Investigator,
March 14, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. Willis Sidney Monroe,
Kingfisher, Oklahoma.

I was born in New Orleans, April 19, 1872, and moved from there with my parents to Omega, Louisiana, where we continued to live until 1880, at which time we moved to Topeka, Kansas, and lived there until 1889.

My father came to Oklahoma Territory for the opening and filed on a place east and north of Kingfisher, after which I came with Mother and the rest of the family to the new home in the fall of 1889. We lived in a dugout the first year, then built a log cabin of three rooms. We did not have many hardships because we brought plenty with us to do until we made a garden and there was plenty of wild game such as rabbits, quails, prairie chickens, and some ducks. On our homestead, we had plenty of timber and we would cut this wood for 50 cents a cord but that was good money because the groceries were not so high.

One of the things I remember the most is when the group of negroes walked through from Memphis. Of course,

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I was not one of this group but I realize how those poor people must have felt when they had been bribed into coming to Oklahoma. Two negroes, McKinley and Sam Jones, had been sent by this group to the opening of the Territory to see if there was any chance for them to get free homes. They came here to find out what they could and return to Memphis with the report, which they did, but when they returned they collected a certain amount of money from each one who was coming through and told them their home would be ready when they arrived here in Kingfisher. However, when the negroes got here there was no land to be had. Those two negroes had taken the poor people's money and had given them nothing in return.

I remember my father and I went to Guthrie to meet the walking train and it was terrible how those people had suffered to get to the homes they did not own. Some had died on the way, others were starving, many were barefooted and ragged. I could not believe any one could live that way. There are only a few left who took part in those times and they do not wish to mention it, they were so disappointed.