

CORYELL, BIRDIE. INTERVIEW 10152

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

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Field worker's name Ophelia D. VestalThis report made on (date) March 2, 19381. This legend was Mrs. Birdie Coryell  
secured from (name) \_\_\_\_\_Address 1202 Monroe Street, Lawton, Oklahoma.This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,If Indian, give tribe Female-White.2. Origin and history of legend or story A story of "A Miners Family".3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank  
sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets  
attached 3

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Ophelia D. Vestal  
Investigator  
March 2, 1938

Interview with Mrs. Birdie Coryell  
1202 Monroe Street, Lawton, Oklahoma

Many, many years ago a family lived in the mountains.

The father was a prospector and miner and had staked claims for each child of his family and each claim was given a name, "Sunset", "Black Hawk", and "Little Pig" were three of the names given to these claims.

When proving up on the claims of the father and mother the father dug a shallow cave and built a small house over it making it a half dugout house, for the family to live in. Anyone on the inside had to go up several steps to get outside of the house.

As the father worked away from home most of the time in the mines, he decided to sell the place and move nearer a town when the weather permitted the family to do so. The place was sold for nearly \$1200.00 and this money was given to the mother to keep until a member of the family should go into town. The money was hidden the best it could be, by tying it real tight in a cloth; then the mother put it in a can, placing it among some cans and jars which they had stored away on a board in the

ceiling of the house.. The house was not ceiled and there were only a few boards laying across the rafters. Sometimes the man had to be away from home at night while working in the mines leaving the older boy, fifteen years old to protect the home.

One day after the mother had finished the family weekly wash, she just hung the clothes on a fence. A neighbor lived near this home in the same direction from the house in which the clothes were hanging. This neighbor had to pass through the miner's yard in going to the post office.

Before dark some of the children noticed a man walking up the neighbor's path. They told their mother but she thought it was only a man coming to borrow something from the neighbor and she soon forgot about the man.

After a long, long time the little dog started to bark and then barked more fiercely. Everyone was quiet and they soon heard rocks whizzing by the houses sometimes hitting it. The children were made to get under the bed in case there should be any shooting.

All of sudden something pushed on the door and as the fifteen year old boy sat near the door holding a rifle, the

person pushed on the door again, then the boy fired toward the top of the door so as not to hit the person but to scare him away. Some man must have heard about the money being there and knowing that the father was away working, had thought that he would get the money and get away with it.

The neighbor heard the shot and came to help this woman and these children, telling them his name before he went near the house and he offered his assistance if they were troubled again. The signal for him to come would be to set a lamp in a certain small window of the little house.

There was never another happening of this kind as long as the family lived there. But soon they moved to a better place and the mother and children felt much safer and happier in their new home.