

COX, ROBERT L.

INTERVIEW

10414

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

#10414

COX, ROBERT L. INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Amelia F. Harris

This report made on (date) April 4, 1938.

1. Name Robert L. Cox

2. Post Office Address Oklahoma City.

3. Residence address (or location) 1110 Petroleum Building.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 11 Year 1907

5. Place of birth Duncan

6. Name of Father J. D. Cox Place of birth Louisiana

Other information about father Moved to Oklahoma in 1900.

7. Name of Mother Bettie H. Cox Place of birth _____

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 _____

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An Interview with Robert L. Cox, Oklahoma City.

By - Amelia F. Harris, Journalist.

April 4, 1938.

I trace my Indian blood from my mother's side. Her grandfather was presumed to be over one-half blood Cherokee. Her grandfather's folks lived in Kentucky but in 1832 all were not in harmony because of differences of opinion on the removal question. Although Mother's grandparents were very comfortably fixed in land, stock and a good home they decided to come to the Indian Territory. In the Summer of 1835 they equipped a covered wagon with complete camping outfit and a good team of mules to drive and started for the Indian Territory. They were on the road about five weeks, finally reaching Tahlequah in September, 1835. Land was plentiful and Great-grandfather took up 100 acres of land, built a log house near a spring of water and remained in the Cherokee Nation for two years.

My great-grandmother became despondent over the hardships they had to endure and prevailed upon her husband to return to their home at Wickliffe, Kentucky, near the mouth of the Ohio River, which he finally agreed to do. They returned to Kentucky with the same wagon and team that they

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started with two years previous. They returned to their home place which they still owned and remained until after the Civil War.

My great-grandfather was a Colonel in the United States Army during the original Mexican War. After the War he was appointed Governor of Oregon by the President in appreciation of his services.

Mother's people moved to Texas later, near Ringgold, Texas. Father and Mother were married in this little town. Father had established a lumber yard in Ringgold and one in Terrace, Texas in 1900. Later, he moved the lumber yard, together with his family, from Terrace, Texas, to Comanche, Oklahoma. This was before there was a railroad across the country to Lawton and Father freighted lumber from Comanche to Lawton before and after the drawing. He had a very thriving business from 1900 to 1905.

Father registered for a homestead at Lawton. His number was #1313, the last number that drew land was 1300.

In the Fall at Comanche we had a County Fair which was very interesting in many ways. It was called the Comanche Carnival. The Comanche Indians came three or

four days in advance of the carnival, pitched their tents and stayed until the carnival was over. Geronimo was with them every year during these gatherings. There was always a traveling photographer and we bought several pictures of Geronimo in different poses from the photographer. These Indians always had a bunch of dogs with them which they sometimes killed and ate, but they usually brought dried meat, flour and other groceries and cooked over a campfire. The women dressed in bright colors with lots of beads and ribbons and bright colored blankets. The men usually wore their native costumes. Their hair hung in two braids and was tied with bright colored yarn. Occasionally some of the younger men would have on civilian pants and bright colored blankets. The Indians always had a big dance at night, they danced to the tune of the tom-tom and they made noise with their mouth.

The eastern part of Comanche County in the hills was inhabited by a very tough class of people who just drifted in from anywhere. There were no railroads over there. It was quite a rendezvous for bad people.

The Chisholm Trail passed about eight miles east

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of Duncan. Some Chisholm families who live around Duncan claim that this trail was named for them.

There was a controversy between Comanche and Duncan over the location of the County Seat. After Duncan won Father moved his lumber yard there and we children all graduated from high school there. After I finished high school I went to Kemper College, Boonville, Missouri, for one year then I went to Oklahoma University for five years receiving an A. B. degree in 1929 and a Law Degree in 1931.

Before practicing law I went to Nowoka to close out a bankrupt stock of General Merchandise. The firm had a large credit business with the Seminole Indians. These Indians were very illiterate and many were not even named. They were known as Seminole Indian No. 1 or some other number or Big Nose Jim. The account would be charged to some description of the Indian. I had a hard time determining who was who.

In June, 1931, I married and moved to Oklahoma City and established a law business and have continued my law

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practice ever since. My people came to Oklahoma too late to establish their rights as Indian citizens. All records of their degree of Indian blood were destroyed when the Court-house burned at Wickliffe, Kentucky. We knew we were Indians but couldn't prove it.