

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

59

DEARING, DURWARD.

INTERVIEW.

4484.

Field Worker's name Zaidas B. Bland.This report made on (date) June 17, 1937. 1931. Name Durward Dearing.2. Post Office Address Blair, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 2 Year 1870.5. Place of birth Allen County, Kentucky.

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ 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 3.

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Zaidee B. Bland,
Interviewer,
June 17, 1937.

An Interview With Durward Dearing,
Blair, Oklahoma.

THE EXPERIENCES OF A PIONEER.

I came with my parents from Kentucky to Blair, Jackson County which was then Greer County, Texas, when a very small boy and have spent all of my life since then in a radius of two hundred miles. I filed on land two miles north and two and a half miles west of Blair and still own the land.

I have worked for wages in a gin; in a store; have been in business for myself; have followed a thrasher through a good many seasons. I have worked with a thrasher all season for two bushels of wheat a day and then sold the wheat for 50 cents a bushel. I have seen people leave here in droves. I counted sixty-two covered wagons which I met while going sixteen miles one morning. Some of them traded out or gave away their claims; some came back the next year and lived here the balance of their lives and their children are living here now.

When working with a thrasher and sleeping on the ground I have had these big tarantulas crawl all over me, but I

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never knew a tarantula to harm anyone in my life. They are always willing to get out of one's way if given a chance. I have never been bitten by a rattler either but have seen and killed a million I guess. That is one snake that is surely a gentleman. He always gives warning of what he is going to do and gives his enemy plenty of chance to kill him or get out of this way or he will get out of the way if you will let him.

I have ridden this country when the grass was so high that no one could see the top of my head in lots of places. There were more coyotes than any wild animals through these parts. They were always man's enemy because they destroyed so much young stock, birds, and farm yard fowls but they were not dangerous to man himself.

I used to haul all my wood from Devil's Canyon. I have hauled loads of stove wood out of that canyon to Mangum and only gotten \$2.50 a load for it when it would take me nearly a week to cut it; split it; haul it to Mangum and sell it and get back home. The wood was not ricked up either; they would sell just a wagon load as long as you could make a

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stick stay on. I have put three bales of cotton on my wagon and hauled it to Vernon to sell. 3 cents would be paid for the first bale and $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents paid for the next two. The country was full of bleached bones where cattle had died and where perhaps buffaloes had been slaughtered. Picking up these bones and selling them was quite a source of ready cash when a person was broke.

I have worked in a store for \$15.00 per month and boarded myself.

I never had many dealings with the Indians. I knew a few of them by sight and Quannah Parker and some of his wives have bought goods from me.

I have drunk water out of muc-holes and never thought about germs. Now I must have it iced to enjoy it at all in summer.