

MORRILL, W. C.

INTERVIEW

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

MORRILL, W.C.

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Field Worker's name Robert W. Small,

This report made on (date) November 24, 1937

1. Name W. C. Morrill,

2. Post Office Address Blackwell, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 221 East Padon Avenue.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 21 Year 1858

5. Place of birth New York.

6. Name of Father Albert Morrill, Place of birth New York

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Hannah Boardman Morrill Place of birth New York

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 7.

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Robert W. Small,  
Investigator,  
November 24, 1937.

Interview with W. C. Morrill,  
221 East Padon Avenue,  
Blackwell, Oklahoma.

I was born in New York, September 21, 1858; and with my father's family I moved to Sumner County, Kansas, in 1871.

In 1881 I came down into the Oklahoma country near the present site of Blackwell on the Mica River to pick sand plums that grew in abundance in many places along the river and creeks of northern Oklahoma; I gathered thirteen bushels of nice plums and took home with me.

In 1885 I made another trip over some of the Oklahoma lands looking for a horse that had been stolen in Kansas. I went to the Foss Ranch house which was a half dugout, and made inquiry from men there about my horse and to other parts of the country near about but never heard of the horse.

At the Opening of the Cherokee Outlet I made the Run horseback from east of Hunnewell, about one and one-half

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miles and drove my claim stake on the N.W. $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 8, TWP. 26 N. Range 1 West, a distance of nineteen miles from the starting point, which I made in one hour. I had five contestants on my claim after I staked it but won out as I was the first one to enter upon the land the day of the Race.

I constructed a frame house on the claim 16 X 18 feet in dimensions and a shed kitchen 10 X 18 feet, with dirt floor; I built a barn 24 X 24 feet covered with boards; I made several efforts in digging wells before I found one with water; finally striking water in one that was one-half mile from my buildings and I moved all the buildings to the well. In drilling one of the wells on my claim the man operating the drill on a contract to get water struck a pocket of gas of some kind that escaped with considerable roar and someone advised me that if oil or gas were found on the claim the Government would take my land away from me, so I paid the driller \$50.00 to stop drilling and move to some other location. This gaseous substance was struck at a depth of ninety-six feet.

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I broke out eighty acres of sod on my own place and seventy-nine acres for neighbors during the first fourteen months after the Opening of the country. In the Spring of 1894, I planted twenty-one acres to oats and thirty-nine acres to corn; I made about fifteen bushels of oats per acre that year but corn was about a complete failure. In the Fall of 1894 I planted the eighty acres to wheat which made about one and one-half bushels per acre at harvest time. In 1896 my crops were almost a failure and in the Fall of 1896 I planted a big acreage to wheat on my place and other lands I rented and the following year of 1897 I harvested from twenty-four to forty bushels per acre, making 6,000 bushels of grain from all my wheat crop. I bought a threshing machine that year and threshed my own 6,000 bushels of wheat and in addition threshed grain over the country for farmers by which I made \$500 cash above all expenses. The following year I ran the threshing machine again and cleared over \$300 and then sold my threshing machine for what it had cost when new.

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I brought to the new claim when I moved upon it, ten head of work horses, twenty-one two-year-old steers, four or five cows, five Poland China brood sows, a Chester-White male and 115 chickens. I brought the chickens in a wagon with a load of household furniture and had the wagon upset in the move which spilled my chickens and everything out on the ground but all the damage I recall was breaking the pendulum rod of an old-time clock which I mended and the old clock has been steadily ticking all these years since and today stands on the mantel keeping accurate time.

I took a great interest in stock and raised the finest hogs I ever saw and kept them fat from the time they were pigs till sold or butchered. I hauled wheat from Kansas the first year on the claim to feed my hogs and after they were ready for market I hauled them to Kansas and sold them for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents per pound. I kept my work horses in the barn on stormy nights in winter and carried water to them, curried them well, kept their stalls cleaned daily and made a new fresh bed of straw

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for them to lie on each night. I looked after and cared for my stock of all kinds with the greatest of care and precision and I prospered to an uncommon degree with all my stock. I also bought cattle and hogs in addition to those I raised and have profited from that line of work, also.

I have worked hard all my life on the farm and cultivated much of other lands in addition to my own farm.

My wife and I are devoted christians and the first Church and Sunday School in the community was held in our own home for the first fifty-four Sundays after we moved to the new claim. Mrs. Waugh taught the first school in the district at \$25 per month. A Reverend Mr. Ford walked out from Blackwell, a distance of seven and one-half miles to preach most every Sunday and my wife has sat on our bed and taught a Sunday School class.

The first death in the community after the country was settled was that of a little boy whose body was buried in a casket made of walnut lumber and nicely trimmed by workmen in the community at a total cost of \$7.00. I

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hauled the body to the cemetery in my spring wagon. I also took my wagon and hauled many others to the cemetery through the years later on.

One time I was digging a well on my place and discovered a petrified tree thirty-three feet beneath the surface of the ground and I broke large sections of the tree trunk and used it in walling the well, together with other stone. I found at the same time the shell of a turtle which had the colored marking upon the shell and everything as are found upon turtles of today, but the shell soon crumbled away after it was removed and exposed to the air.

I have grown a crop of oats, millet and wheat upon the same ground in the space of fourteen months and good yields were made of all three of the products.

I have accumulated enough by hard work and good management through the years to enable me to give to my children a fine farm of 160 acres each, or city property of equal value, I now have four children living upon these farms or deriving the income of valuable city property. In addition



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to this, my wife and I are enjoying the evening of life  
in a modern home at 221 East Padon Avenue, Blackwell,  
Oklahoma.