

NORRIS, G. W.

INTERVIEW

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

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Field worker's name Robert H. Boatman.

Report made on (date) April 21, 1938. 1938

This legend was secured from (name) G. W. Norris.

Address Blanchard, Oklahoma.

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

Origin and history of legend or story

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

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Robert H. Boatman
Investigator
April 21, 1938.

Interview with G. W. Norris
Blanchard, Oklahoma.

I was born September 28, 1861, in Texas where my parents had come from Arkansas, then in 1875 I came to Indian Territory on horseback.

We forded Red River near Denison as it was in the Spring. In the winter when the river froze over, one had to cross on ice which was very dangerous as a horse was always slipping and falling on the ice. There was the treacherous quicksand to beware of in places, too.

We first settled near Ryan on the banks of Red River and in the Chickasaw Nation.

Our first home was a dugout. In two years, however, we were able to build a log house with a stick and mud chimney. The inconveniences and few comforts of these early homes are well-known. I will give you an illustration.

On Tuesday it snowed all day and night and then a blizzard came. We burned up all our wood by Friday and

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the snow was too deep to find any more, so in desperation we burned our large dining table and then our two chairs, and bed slats. Luckily, the wind let up and the snow melted and we were kept busy the next week rebuilding furniture.

Drinking water was a major problem, too, as there were no wells and we got our water wherever possible, creeks and sometimes out of old cow tracks.

We began our life in the Indian Territory as farmers. The only crops raised were corn and a very small amount of cotton. The corn was used for bread and livestock, and what little was sold was to nearby ranchers at 10¢ or 12¢ per bushel.

Belcher, Texas, was our trading post and also the market for our cotton. It was a small town located in the northern part of Montague County, Texas. We also sold some cotton at Purcell and Ardmore, but very seldom.

I've had no great amount of experience with Indians, but my few personal dealings with them were friendly.

At this time there were no roads, no bridges and no railroads here--only trails.