

## [Aleck Chambers]

S241 - LI DUP

NAME OF WORKER Ruby E. Wilson ADDRESS R1 box 10b North Platte

DATE September 23, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Mr. Aleck Chambers 814 West 10th St.
2. Date and time of interview Sept. 23, 1:00 — 4:30
3. Place of interview His Home
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. A four-room house with front porch built on and enclosed for dwelling. House is occupied by another tenant than the Chamber's family. [???

1. Ancestry Scotch-Irish
2. Place and date of birth 1871— Iowa
3. Family Several children
4. Place lived in, with dates Iowa, Kans, Nebr. Texas
5. Education, with dates About 6th grade, quit at 14

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6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates cowpuncher 1885-1893 or 1895 Hay hand and odd jobs homesteader, finally farmer.

7. Special skills and interests Spends much time listening to others, is quite superstitious about his health.

8. Community and religious activities Used to dance, no particular / religion

9. Description of informant A tall large man, finely proportioned, very chill blue eyes, white, hair, very quiet, is sparing of words is somewhat deaf and has a surprising smile. Wears a brass bracelet on left wrist to keep rheumatism down.

10. Other points of gained in interview One point most predominating through out, tho without any particular evidence was that there was much this man wished to leave untold for reasons of his own and which he evidently wished to remain his own. But on the whole Mr. Chambers talked freely on the incidents he seemed to choose as suitable to tell. He never once talked at random and I carried away the feeling that the part of the story he recalls that concerned him most he didn't make a practice of telling, if ever.

Came up from around Oberlin Kansas 53 years ago. I left Kansas because of drouth, there was not anything to do. I came up lookin' for work. I was 14 years old. I came here ahead of my folks, they didn't come up for 5 years afterwards. I wore leather pants and a white hat, working for Major Walker. Lester Walker is his boy here in town. I worked for Bratt and Cap. Haskell. Got about \$20 a month and found, whenever night caught you, you laid down. I worked for 6 years at that.

I went to haying then and worked around at different ranches putting up hay. [We?] run a big hay baler. Later I owned one.

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This town was open to us cowboys. We rode into town [right?] into the saloons and drank and roped their signs and pulled them down and drug them off. We was never arrested for anything. They was [glad?] to see us and glad to see us go.

There was a gang used to steal horses and cattle, INdians did, but this was white men, ran clear into Texas. They used to get them on the Sapa Creek in Kansas. There's where they finally broke up their gang. Anything that went up in the Besinal never came back and no one ever came back. They laid for them and shot them on the trail and stole their things.

There used to be a fellow around Indinola Kansas on the Sapa Creek running horses. The thieves got so bad he got to sleeping out with his horses. One night, he woke up suddenly and a man was standing over him with a gun pointed at him. There was not a thing he could do but he said "roll in." The fellow just stood there and didn't make a move. Pretty soon he said "I belive I'll [do?] that" and he crawled into the man's roll with him. He didn't sleep any but when morning came the stranger says "Now I want a horse and saddle. I was goingo to shoot you but I didn't feel like it when you said "roll in."

The man said, "Alright, but you'd better eat [soomt?] breakfast first. You can have the horse." Then after he gave him something to eat the fellow says, "Now I want the horse but I'll get it back to you. I might not be back but you'll get your horse back." The man didN't pay much attention, just thought he was out a horse and two or three weeks later he saw a rider coming leading another horse and it was the horse he'd let the man have. After that his horses was never bothered anymore and he never lost any more. He never saw the man again. But fellow's would get their horses shot out from under them, a leg broke or so they couldn't travel and come and borrow a horse. They used to get caught up with down in there and a lot of them got strung up to the cotton woods along the creek. They finally strung up enough of them that the rest of them got out. They wasn't any laws but lynch. A bunch of them would get onto the trail of a fellow and keep a crowding him till they got him

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and got a rope around his neck and got it over a tree limb. That's all there was to it and that is what stopped them.

All you wanted for a job in them days was a saddle and blanket, schaps, spurs and bridle and rope and a 44 colt. You roped your own horse and somebody helped you get started and they rode on into camp and left you to get there if you could and by the time you did your horse was pretty well broke.

You rode him till he was wore oout then you roped another and broke him in. We wasn't breaking a horse to buck like they do in these rodeo's we was breaking him from bucking to work but we didn't mind a little bucking if they wanted to. We pulled all the leather we could find. If they broke us loose one place we'd hang onto another. If you didn't, you walked into camp and maybe you was out a day or so or 3 or 4 days. I never was throwed in my life.

We had plenty to eat, the best meat, steaks and biscuits and black coffee and potatoes. In them days there was a place to eat and you was welcome at any place people lived. It didn't make no difference if they was there or not you ate what you wanted to and carried nothing away.

I was never sick a day in my life till I got this rhenmatism 3 or 4 years ago. That's what I'm wearing this brass bracelet or band for 10 or 12 years. Wore out 3 or 4 of them, sometimes it turns green, thats when its drawing the poison out and then again its just as bright and purty as gold. superstitiion

We used to have good times, we'd get together and dance, in people's houses, in the kitchen of front room or maby they only had one room and we'd puch the furniture back, the chairs and table, sometimes there wasn't any floor, just dirt and we'd wet it down sometimes 3 or 4 times, me and my wife used to go before we was married and we went some afterwards too.

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I'd homesteaded a place just to have some where's to camp in winter, when I wasn't haying or working and the first summer after we was married I got up one morning, I'd heard arattlesnake but I couldn't see anything of it and I shoved the door open clear back to the wall and that was all that saved me from getting bit. It was behind the door and I pinned it back to the wall. It was as big around as my arm. There was lots of rattlesnakes then and game deer and antelope and elk.

The last deer I saw I run down over in [Keith's?] pasture, had it onto the horse with me part of the time, I'd run up beside it and it would jump and strike at the horse.

One of the worst things we had to put up with was fire. It was awful and it would get started and burn mabe for days and then the wind would change and it would burn another direction. We used to take a green beef hide with a rope on each side and ride along two of us, with that between us, we'd get way out to the end, that was the best way to fight fire, then others could come along behind us and whip out the rest of it. The fires was bad because there wasn't so many people here in them days and the grass was so high, it grew arm high and the fire could burn over so much.