

[Elisha Leslie]

Edith L. Crawford

Carrizozo, N. Mex. Interview

Oct 17 1938 2nd

Date: October 14, 1938.

Words: 1247

Topic: Pioneer Story

Source of Information:

Elisha Leslie.

I was born February 14, 1873, in Dublin, Erath County, Texas, and came to New Mexico when I was ten years old. I have lived in Lincoln County about fifty-three years.

My father, Robert Leslie, was born in Fulton County, Georgia, May 17, 1853. My mother, Elizabeth Ward, was born in Georgia, (I do not know the town or county) January 6, 1857.

My parents were married about the year 1871 in Dublin, Texas. I do not know when they came to Texas. My father owned a farm near Dublin Texas, and raised corn, small grains, potatoes, and had a small bunch of cattle and a few horses.

My father had some big heavy teams and sometimes used them in doing construction work. I know that at one time he had four teams at work for a rail-road company, but I do not remember just where this was. My father met a man by the name of Jack Farr, who came down into Texas from Lincoln County, New Mexico. He was always telling my father

Library of Congress

what a great country New Mexico was and wanted to sell my father a ranch that he had in Lincoln County.

In the spring of 1883 my father decided to sell out his farm near Dublin Texas, and move to Lincoln County. Two other men that he knew wanted to come too, so these three men, my father, a man by the name of Dink Arthurs, and a man named Yorke, (I have forgotten his other name), decided to set out for Lincoln County. They had three covered wagons, one to each family. In our family there was my father and mother, myself, Lura, Jim and Callie. (A brother, Leech, had died in Texas several years before.) There was Mr. and Mrs. Arthurs and one boy and one girl.

2

Mr. and Mrs. Yorke had no children. My father and the other two men decided to drive their cattle thro'ugh. The other two men hired two men, brothers, named Carter and I made a hand for my father. We three rode horseback and looked after the cattle, about 200 head.

Each wagon had their own provisions and each family did their own cooking over a camp fire. The woman and children slept in the wagons and the men slept on the ground. Each wagon had their own chuck box and water kegs. The only fresh meat that we had on the trip were prairie chickens and antelope that we shot on the way. We did not see any Indians or buffalo and we had no serious trouble. We grazed the cattle along and when we would come to good grass and water we would sometimes stay an long as a week.

We crossed the Pacos river at Fort Patches. We had heard so much about the quicksands on this river and how dangerous it was to cross it that my father got a pilot to guide us across. We got all three wagons and all the cattle across witho'ut any serious trouble.

Billy the Kid had not been dead very long and we went out to see his grave. My father had met Billy the Kid at a railroad construction camp but did not know him well.

Library of Congress

From Fort Patches we went down to Roswell and up the Hondo river thro'ugh the Mescalero Indian reservation, thro'ugh Tularosa and on over to Weed, New Mexico.

We got to Weed in the fall of 1883. We were on the road about three months. The two Carter boys left us at Weed and I do not know what became of them. The Arthurs family stayed in New Mexico only a year or so and went back to Texas.

3

The Yorkes lived around Weed for several years and the last I heard of them they were still in the Penasco country, in New Mexico.

My father stayed in Weed only about a month and then decided to go to the Farr Ranch, which is about eight miles from White Oaks, New Mexico, and is now known as the Felix Guebara Ranch.

We drove our cattle from Weed, thro'ugh the mountains, to the Farr Ranch. We stayed there at this ranch all that winter. In the spring of 1884 my father filed on a homestead at the foot of the Tuscon Mountains. My sister Callie died during the winter that we were at the Farr ranch.

After we had lived on the homestead for several years my father bought a small place in White Oaks and stayed there during the fell and winter and sent us children to school there. After school was out in the spring we would go back to the homestead. It was near enough for my father to go back and forth to the homestead all the time and see how things were getting along.

One winter I got tired of going to school and decided that I would get out on my own, so I ran away from White Oaks and went out to the Block Ranch and hired out as a bronc buster. I was about seventeen, I guess then. I was a good rider and not afraid to tackle any

Library of Congress

kind of horse. I worked for the Block outfit for about five years. It was owned then by two brothers, Andy and Mel Richardson.

About 1894 I went to Arizona. I opened a meat market at Springerville, Arizona. I was married there in 1895 to Minnie English. After I married I went to work for a man named Harris Miller, who owned a ranch near Springerville. I worked for his for about three years. While I was working for him, breaking wild horses, a horse fell on me and crushed me up pretty badly.

4

I was in a hospital at St. Johns, Arizona, for more than six weeks. As soon as I was able to travel again I came back to my father's place in the Tuscon mountains. I know that my days of breaking horses was over.

I homesteaded on a place of my own not very far from my father's place. I raised a few cattle and horses and did some dry farming. My wife and I had four children, Ruby, Walker, Lura and Alma. When Alma was about three months old my wife died. This was about 1920. My mother-in-law, Mrs. George English took my children to care for. Mr. and Mrs. English lived on a place about a mile from our place.

About 1923 I moved in to Carrizozo New Mexico and opened up a meat market. I brought my three oldest children with me and sent them to school. Ruby, the oldest girl kept house for me.

In 1933, I was married to Mrs. Ruby Wright, of Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 1934 we moved to White Oaks and I bought the place that my father had owned there, and my wife and I still own it and live there.

My father died in February, 1932, and my mother died just a month later, March 17, 1932, in White Oaks, New Mexico. Both are buried there. My parents had ten children, five of whom are still living here in New Mexico, one in Colorado, and four are dead. The names

Library of Congress

of the children who are living are, Elisha, Lura, Robert, Ward, Ben and Ellis. My brother Ward still lives on the old place that my father homesteaded in 1864.

NARRATOR: Elisha Leslie, Aged 65 years. White Oaks, New Mexico.

Edith L. Crawford,

Carrizozo, N. Mex.

Corrections on PIONEER STORY of Elisha Leslie. Page 1, paragraph 5 My mother and father has ten children, Elisha, Lure, Leech, Jim and Callie were born in Texas. Robert, Ward, Ben, Jesse and Ellis, were born In New Mexico. Leech died before we moved from Texas to New Mexico. Callie died the first winter we lived in New Mexico, late in the year 1883. My brother Jim died about the year 1889, and Jesse was killed in an automobile accident about the year 1929, all died in New Mexico, except Leech. Page 2, paragraph 4. Billy the Kid's grave in at Fort Sumner New Mexico, DeBace County. Page 2, paragraph 5. Weed, New Mexico, in low in Otero County, in the Sacramento Mountains, about four miles southeast of Cloudcroft, New Mexico. When we came to this country in 1883, all of the places mentioned were in Lincoln County at that time. Page 3, paragraph 1. The Penasco country referred to in this story was formed by a group of ranchers who settled on a small dry creek, called Penasco Creek. It is in the Sacramento Mountains and at that time in Lincoln County. Page 3, paragraph 3. Our homestead was in Lincoln County, in the Tuscon Mountains, about eight miles southwest of White Oaks, New Mexico, and about fourteen miles northwest of Capitan, New Mexico.