

## [Elderdo Chavez]

Edith L. Crawford,

Carrizozo N. Mex. [?] Billy [??] [??]

Elderdo Chavez,

Carrizozo, N.M.

Words 1512

JUL 7 - 1938 1st PIONEER STORY As told by Elderdo Chavez, Carrizozo, N. M.

I was born in 1880 at Las Chozos New Mexico, which is located seven miles southeast of the town of Lincoln and have lived all my life in Lincoln County. My father Cleto Chavez was born April 26, 1845, in Socorro Texas which was just below Franklin Texas (which is now known as El Paso Texas.) His father died when he was six months old and his mother when he was twelve years old. He was left to make his own way early in life. He went to Franklin Texas and earned his living as best he could doing odd jobs. One day he met a man by the name of George Neblett who owned and operated a saw mill on the Mescalero Indian Reservation. He had freighted some lumber to Franklin by ox teams. He offered Father a job to work around the mill at ten dollars per month and his keep. He also taught him to speak English. This was in 1870. Father went back to Mescalero with Mr. Neblett, traveling by ox team. They were always on the lookout for Indians in tho'se days as they were always going on the war path. At night when they stopped to camp they formed a circle with the wagons and put the oxen inside the circle. The men folks slept inside the circle and one or more of the men kept watch during the night. Father said that they did not see an Indian on the whole trip beck to Mescalero. One day after arriving at the mill Mr. Neblett put Father on a horse and told him to ride just as fast as he could to

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Tularosa New Mexico and warn the settlers that the Indians had gone on the war path and were headed for Tularosa. Father said that he rode as fast as the horse could go all the way. Just before he got to Tularosa he met Marino Ruiz riding horseback. He was going up on the mountain side to cut some wood. Father told [C. 15 - N. Mex.?] 2 him that the Indians were coming and to turn back. He paid no attention to him but went on up the road. About the time Father reached Tularosa he heard the Indians giving their war whoop and he knew that they had killed Marino Ruiz and sure enough they found his body the next day. On this same trip Father saw Benito Montoya coming on horseback but he was too far away to be warned. Benito heard the Indians coming tho" and he rode into some Tule grass which grew awfully rank and was tall enough to hide him and his horse and the Indians passed him by. Benito told me this some story years after it happened and he remembered seeing my father on his way to Tularosa. (This same Benito Montoya was one of the jurors when Billy the Kid was tried at Mesilla New Mexico for the killing of Sheriff Brady.) The people of Tularosa had built barricades to protect themselves from the Indians. They dug deep trenches and would fight from these trenches. They fought the Indians off on this occasion witho'ut much loss. When the Indians went on the war path they always left the reservation. Mr. Neblett was a fine upright man and never has had any trouble with the Indians. He sold his saw mill to A. N. Blazer in 1873 and it was later called Blazer's Mill.

Mr. Neblett, his wife and son were killed on the east side of the Organ Mountains. They were on their way to Old Mesilla to locate. They all three had been shot and their bodies left where they fell. The only thing missing was the team and until this day no one has ever known who murdered the Neblett family. Father had left the employ of Mr. Neblett in March 1872 and moved to Picacho, New Mexico where he worked on the farm of William Casey and tended the horses and cattle. In October 1872 he left Casey and went to work for Jack Price who owned a farm at Picacho. In October 1874 Father 3 married Prudencia Miranda and they moved to Las Chozos, where Father took up a homestead of one hundred and sixty acres. He farmed and raised cattle and horses. He was living at Las Chozos during

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the Lincoln County war but he took no part in it. He and Jose Miranda his father in law used to laugh and say that when they were with Murphy and Dolan they were for them and when they were with McSween they were for McSween but they never were involved in any way in the war. My Mother was born May 10, 1855 in a small town called Acacio in Socorro County and came to Lincoln County with her parents in 1862. They come in a wagon drawn by oxen by way of the Gallinas Mountains and while crossing the mountains they met a band of Indians. It was just about night and at this time there were about fifteen wagons in the train, as each day other wagons met and traveled on with the Mirandas. When they sighted the Indians the wagon train stopped and made camp for the night. They formed a circle with the wagons and put the families and all the stock inside the circle, and prepared to give the Indians a battle. The Indians had stopped on the mountain side and were watching the people in the wagons. They did not attack at once and there was a fellow in the crowd by the name of Juan Lucero who could understand and speak some Indian, so he went out to within hollering distance of the Indians and asked them if they were ready to fight and the Indian chief replied that they did not want to fight then but would be back the next day at noon to fight. The wagon train laid over in this camp for four days waiting for the Indians to come back but they never did show up, so the wagon train went on their way to Lincoln New Mexico. They traveled very slowly and some of the men folks rode 4 ahead of the wagons and some behind, to protect the train from the Indians in case they were in the mountains waiting for them. They never saw any more Indians and arrived safe and sound in Lincoln. It took about two weeks to make this trip by ox team from Socorro to Lincoln New Mexico. Jose Miranda and his family went on to Las Chozos, seven miles east of Lincoln and took up a homestead. He went to farming and raised horses and cattle, but during 1865 the Indians got so bad they would come into the fields where Jose was plowing with oxen and unyoke the oxen and drive them away, and they stole all of his horses and cattle. After the Indians were quieted down the Government paid Jose Miranda (my grandfather) for all of the horses and cattle that the Indians had stolen from him. These incidents were told to me by my father and mother. I was a very small boy at the time.

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Jack Gillman and David Warner were drinking and they went to a house of ill fame and were raising a rough house. Some one went to Juan Martinez who was the constable at that time, and told him to go to this house and stop the rough stuff. He walked up to the door and called Jack Gillman who came to the door. Juan told him he was under arrest for disturbing the peace. Gillman said, "All right Juan, any thing you say is all right with me." About this time David Warner came up and said to Gillman, "Don't you surrender to him, you don't have to obey any orders from him." Juan Martinez reached for his gun and so did David Warner. Both fired at the same time and both fell to the floor mortally wounded and died in a few minutes. Gillman was so scared at the out come that he made a dash for the river and hid in some brush. The people of the town were so mad about the killing of the two men that they formed a posse and went to hunt for Gillman and when they found him some one 5 in the posse shot him on sight. Later they found that Martinez had shot Warner and Warner had shot Martinez and that they had killed an innocent man when they shot Gillman but it was too late then. My father died in Carrizozo New Mexico, November 1, 1932 at the age of eighty seven years. My mother is eighty three years old and is living with one of her grand daughters in San Francisco California.

I have served as Probate judge in Lincoln County for eight years and have been Justice of the Peace in Carrizozo for four years.

Narrator: Elerdo Chavez, Carrizozo, New Mexico, Aged 58 years.