

SOUTH, P. W.

INTERVIEW

#8999

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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma  
SOUTH, P. W. INTERVIEW 8999

Field Worker's name John F. Daugherty

This report made on (date) October 23 1937

1. Name P. W. South

2. Post Office Address Mill Creek, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 30 Year 1865

5. Place of birth Tennessee

6. Name of Father Andy South Place of birth Alabama

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother Sallie Russian Place of birth Tennessee

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 \_\_\_\_\_

John F. Daugherty  
Investigator  
October 20, 1937

Interview with  
P. W. South  
Mill Creek, Oklahoma.

My parents were Andy South, born in Alabama, and Sallie Russian, born in Tennessee. There were seven children. Father was a farmer. I was born March 30, 1865, in Tennessee.

I came to the Territory on horseback with a half brother in 1878. He located at Thackerville and I lived with him for five years. We farmed. He paid the permit of \$5.00 each year to the Chickasaw Government. I put in the first farm near Springer. I married Mrs. Springer in 1892, several years after her husband died. Springer was named for him.

In those days they gathered their prisoners to take them to Fort Smith like we gathered our cattle. The J. R. Ranch west of Springer was headquarters for the prisoner's wagon in Heck Thomas'

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territory, and many times I have seen the prisoners tied to wagon wheels with chains like cattle.

I had a neighbor who sold whiskey by the drink to the Santa Fe crew when the road bed was being built. He carried a glass and each fellow paid 25 cents a drink. He was arrested and taken to the J. R. Ranch. He was hand-cuffed and sitting on the spring seat of the prisoners' wagon when another prisoner was brought in. He held out his hands and yelled, "Come get your jewelry. I have mine."

I witnessed a killing near Springer and they wanted me for a witness at the trial. I hid in the cotton patch for two days to keep the officers from finding me, for I had no desire to go to court even as a witness.

I moved on Rock Prairie five miles southwest of Mill Creek about thirty years ago and have resided here since. I built my home near Rattlesnake Spring, so named by Governor Guy of the

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Chickasaws because he killed the largest rattlesnake he had ever seen near this spring. It bears that name today.

A. C. Chapman, who owned the Chapman Ranch near Springer, saw a negro breaking his wire fence by beating the wire between two rocks. He wanted to get his horse across the fence and he was breaking the wire instead of pulling up the posts.

Chapman shot one of the rocks out of the negro's hand and the negro fell as if he were shot. Mr. Chapman thought he had killed him and rode away. When he again came to this spot the negro was gone, so he knew that he had not killed him.

There were many rattlesnakes in those days.

I was greatly amused at a cowboy whom I knew. One day he encountered a huge rattlesnake and decided to rope it. This he did and the rattlesnake made for him. He was so frightened that he could only stand and shout for help. One of the other boys came and shot the snake before it reached this boy.

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In those days small-pox was a dreaded disease. It was almost sure death if one had it. When anybody took it he was isolated in a log cabin by himself and food was carried to him and slipped under the door. If the relatives of the one afflicted could find a person who had had the small-pox they asked this person to stay with the person who had small-pox until he or she was well or dead, and people who had small-pox more often died than not. As soon as a small-pox patient died, he or she was placed in a home made coffin and buried without a funeral service.

A runner went in front to warn anybody he saw that the body of a man or woman who had died with small-pox was being carried to the cemetery and everybody went inside his house and closed the windows and doors as the body was hauled or carried past the house.