

THOMAS, S. L. INTERVIEW 12709

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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
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Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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THOMAS, S. L.

INTERVIEW

12709

Field Worker's name Johnson H. Hampton

This report made on (date) January 20, 1938

Name Mr. S. L. Thomas (a pioneer)

Post Office Address Antlers, Oklahoma

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

DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 24 Year 1862

Place of birth Kentucky

Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth Kentucky

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth Kentucky

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

For 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Johnson H. Hampton,  
Investigator,  
January 20, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. S.L. Thomas,  
Antlers, Oklahoma.

I was born December 24, 1862, in Kentucky, came to the Indian Territory when I was about forty years old and had just been married when I came to the Choctaw Nation.

My father and mother both lived in Kentucky, they never did come to this country, they died at the old home place and were buried there. When I left home I came to Denison, Texas, lived there for awhile. I then left there and came to the Indian Territory, Choctaw Nation. I wanted to come over to this country for I saw an opportunity for a man who wanted to do something and to make a living and maybe make some money besides. I came over with a little money and when I came, my wife and I came over in a wagon from Denison, Texas, and located near a small village out in the country, I rented a small farm; we lived in a box house; it was not a very good house but we did not get out and build us one as we had no furniture when we got located so I bought some furniture at Durant. The place we lived was known as Blue County at that time.

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When I got located I went in partnership with a man by the name of W. L. Donigan in the cattle business and we bought up lot of cattle and turned them loose out on the prairie, for there were no fences then, the country being wide open. There were no farms to amount to anything at that time and there were few people living in there. There were some Choctaws lived in there but they lived several miles apart and they had but very few farms at that time.

This man that I went in partnership with in the cattle was an intermarried man; he had married a Choctaw woman so he had citizenship rights and did not cost us anything to have those cattle out on the range. We were partners for several years when I sold out my interest to him and left there coming to what is now Roswell. However at that time there was no Roswell. When I then located there I went into partnership with an Indian of the name of M. W. Leflore going again in the cattle business. We had a good many cattle which we would take to Durant and ship them to Kansas City. We made good money then. The cattle were cheap and we could buy

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them at our own price. We were partners for several years, then I sold out my interest to him and left there.

I came to Antlers and located out east of Antlers, on Little River and went into the cattle business again;

but in that country there were no prairies at all. However the cattle did well, the grass on the mountains was fine and there was lots of cane on the creeks. I did not feed the cattle any food at all during the winter as in the winter they would go down on the creek bottoms and in the Spring they would come out on the hills, all I had to do was to gather them up in the Spring and turn them loose on the range.

When I first came to Wade, that country was a good cow country but the settlers ruined it by breaking it up for farms. When that was done I left there. Back in the mountains there are not very many places where a farm can be put in so the country is still open, but the grass is not like it used to be. A good many people live in there now and the grass is not like it used to be and the cane is all gone but the country is open just like it was at that time.

I finally sold out my cattle as I was getting too old to take

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care of them and bought up goats instead; I have had as high as five hundred head of goats in the mountain and have had lot of trouble with wolves as the country is full of them back in the mountains and I had to keep a close watch on them in order to keep my goats from being eaten up by the wolves, I have sold out my goats and I am not doing anything now.

I have not been to any Indian camp meetings nor to their "cries", and have never seen an Indian dance. They just don't dance now, I have not seen an Indian ball game, I could have gone to their camp meetings but I thought that it was no use for me to go for I could not understand them anyway so I would not go.

I have lived among the Indians ever since I came to this country; have never had any trouble with any one of them, I have been their legal adviser ever since I have been here in this country, and they are all my friends, and in my opinion there are no better class of people than the Indian people; they are law-abiding people and they do not bother any one at all if they are let alone, like they ought to; they are all my friends and I sure would stand by them, I am not going anything now. I am too old to try anything else now and I am staying in Antlers, at this time.

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In my opinion there is no better class of people than the Indian people; they are law-abiding people and they do not bother any one at all if they are let alone. They are all my friends and I sure would stand by them.

I am not doing anything now as I am too old to try anything else, and I am staying in Antlers at this time.