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BEEN, MONT

INTERVIEW

13722

421

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

BEEN, MONT

INTERVIEW

13722

Field Worker's name Johnson H. Hampton,This report made on (date), April 26th, 1938

1. Name Mr. Mont Been, A Pioneer,
2. Post Office Address Antlers, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) _____
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 18th Year 1893
5. Place of birth Choska, Indian Territory

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth Arkansas

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth Missouri

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 5.

BEEN, MONT

INTERVIEW

13722

Johnson H. Hampton,
Investigator,
April 26, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. Mont Been, A Pioneer,
Antlers, Oklahoma.

I was born May 18th, 1893, at Choska, Indian Territory, Creek Nation; my father and mother came from Sebastian County, Arkansas; my grandfather came from Mississippi with the Choctaws when they moved to this country where he died and is buried. My mother was born in Sedalia, Missouri, and after my father married her they lived in Arkansas until they moved to this country in a covered wagon. It took them eleven days to make the trip as there were no roads at that time. They had all their furniture in this wagon. My father said that he wanted to see the new country and that he had understood that it offered good opportunities for a young man who wanted to make a living for his family so he loaded up his wagon and started. He came with his wife, there were no other people with him, he and his wife came by themselves and after they got to Choska, Indian Territory, Father rented a farm from an Indian, moved on it and went to work on this farm. They lived in a log house floored with cottonwood lumber but it was a pretty good house

BEEN, MONT

INTERVIEW

13722

-2-

at that and after they got located they bought some more furniture for the house and lived on this farm for several years, and this farm is the place where I was born. They raised all the corn and cotton they could gather and at that time people made lots of corn and cotton and other things which they planted on the farm. They raised some cattle and hogs on this farm for their own use and sold some of the hogs to the neighbors around but cattle and hogs did not bring but very little. Father made money on what he sold for it did not take very much work to raise all the corn that a man could gather. In fact, they raised too much corn for the market and if they did want to sell it they could not get anything for it, for it was sold for about 10 cents per bushel at that time and it was better to feed it to the hogs than to sell it to the neighbors; they would sometimes give the corn away to people who were traveling through.

At that time the country was open and it was not settled very much so there were no fences much out on the prairies and the grass was just fine. In fact it was a

BEEN, MONT

INTERVIEW

13722

-3-

better cow country than a farming country. It was good land but on account of the grass and other things it was better cow country but the farmers ruined it by breaking it up and making farms out of the country. We left that country and moved back to Sebastian County, Arkansas; lived there for a few years and we then moved back to Pushmataha County in 1910. We have lived here ever since we came to Pushmataha County. I got married to one of the daughters of Cloid McCarty who was living in Antlers and is still in Antlers. After that I went to the country and went to farming and we are still on the farm and at this time we raise corn, cotton and other farm products and we raise a few cattle and hogs on the farm. We had our cotton ginned at Antlers and sold it at the same place and we traded here in Antlers all this time.

When we moved to this county in 1910 there was a good deal of game such as deer and all other small game and there were turkeys and plenty of fish in the creeks. We would go out and kill what we wanted to eat but we did not waste any of the game at that time but later the white people began

BEEN, MONT

INTERVIEW

13722

-4-

to settle the country and they would just kill the game whether they wanted it or not and pretty soon the game was gone and the fish in the creeks as well, so now there is not any game to speak of at all and the fish is about gone in the creeks and the rivers. Out where I lived at that time there were no houses to be seen ^{or} but very few, and there was no land in cultivation that amounted to anything and the whole country was unsettled at that time between the town and the river. There were no houses to be seen along the road and there were no fences; the timber was fine pine, oak, and cedar but the trees were soon cut out by the sawmillers and now there is no timber of any value to be seen.

I was elected County Commissioner of the county for several terms and then I was elected County Assessor for several terms and I have served in some capacity in Pushmataha County ever since I moved to this country; now I am on the farm out from Antlers.

I have been among two tribes of Indians since I came to Indian Territory and I have found them to be honest and

BEEN, MONT

INTERVIEW

13722

-5-

law-abiding and good neighbors, and they do not bother anybody but attend to their own business if they are let alone. They fight among themselves when they get drunk but when they are not drinking they are the best people anywhere. Of course, most of them like this "fire-water" and when they get hold of it they surely will get drunk, but they are surely good people. To my mind they are about the best people that I have known since I have been with them and have been living in their country.

My father and mother both died in Oklahoma but I had them taken back to the old home and they are buried in the Liberty Cemetery in Arkansas where we used to live. I am living about seven miles west of Antlers on a farm.