

JOHNSON, H. D.

INTERVIEW

9963

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

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JOHNSON, H. D.

INTERVIEW

#9963

Field Worker's name John F. Daugherty

This report made on (date) February 15 1938

1. Name H. D. Johnson

2. Post Office Address Sulphur, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Murray County

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 13 Year 1857

5. Place of birth Tennessee

6. Name of Father Silas Johnson Place of birth Tennessee
Farmer

7. Name of Mother Louiza Dodd 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 3.

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John F. Daugherty
Investigator
February 14, 1938.

Interview with H. D. Johnson
Sulphur, Oklahoma.

My parents were Silas M. Johnson, farmer, and Louiza Dodd Johnson, both born in Tennessee, and I was also born in that state September 13, 1857, one of ten children.

I came to the Indian Territory in 1884. We were looking for a location, and we drove for months all over the Territory. My wife was afraid to stay anywhere alone, she was so afraid of the Indians.

We drove through the Comanche country and I learned some of their peculiar customs. One which I recall in particular was their belief in their Medicine Man, a man whom they believed was endowed with a superhuman skill in the compounding of certain medicines and the consultation with oracles and omens that enabled him to bring about events or prophesy concerning their fulfillment. He was a great official in their tribe and in cases of sickness he worked on the credulity of the patient instead of his vital organs, employing wizard like spells in preference to medicines to effect a cure.

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However in some cases herbs were used. The Medicine Man consulted his Oracles before the undertaking of any serious enterprise and if he failed to get good results from the oracles the scheme was always abandoned until another time, when conditions might prove more satisfactory. If the Medicine Man failed to properly guide or inform the council he lost his prestige and sometimes his life. He wore crosses which were supposed to exert an influence toward helping him achieve superhuman power.

We finally went to Texas where we remained until 1894 when I again had a desire to see the Indian Territory. This time we came into the Chickasaw Nation and settled near Oil Springs south of the present site of Sulphur, at which place I ran a store and post office. The mail came from Cobb Town on a horse every other day. I freighted my groceries from Ardmore.

Cowmen were the only market for corn which sold for about 15¢ per bushel. These cowmen had stock pens on the Washita River near Pauls Valley where the cattle were put and fed just before being driven to Atoka for shipment, before the Santa Fe was built through Pauls Valley in 1887. After that they were shipped from Pauls Valley.

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During the time the Chickasaw Legislature was in session each Fall at Tishomingo the Indian legislators brought their families and camped on Pennington Creek. This was a great annual event among them.

Jack Doolin lived east of Oil Springs for three years. He traded with me, and he never failed to pay for what he bought. When he moved he asked Brother and me to inspect his cattle, so that if anybody accused him of taking their cattle with him he would have witnesses. He moved to the Osage Nation where he was later killed. Somebody murdered him and burned the grass around his dead body to hide any evidence which might expose his slayer.