

INDEX CARDS:

Greer County
Russell
Living Conditions

JOHN W. LANFORD. INTERVIEW. Form A-(S-149)
BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

4728. 283

Field Worker's name Ruth Kerbo.

This report made on (date) July 1, 1937. 1937

1. Name Mr. John W. Lanford.

2. Post Office Address Mangum, Route #2.

3. Residence address (or location) Fifteen miles southwest of Mangum.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 26 Year 1875.

5. Place of birth Spartansburg, South Carolina.

6. Name of Father R. J. Lanford. Place of birth South Carolina.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Lufsey King. Place of birth South Carolina.

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.

Ruth Kerbo,
Interviewer.
July 1, 1937

An Interview With John W. Lanford,
Route #2, Mangum, Oklahoma.

I had been working in the cotton mills at Columbia, South Carolina, when my health failed and I had to quit.

Kemp Lanford is a relative of mine and had been in Mangum for quite awhile. He wrote and insisted on my coming out here for my health and told me of the possibilities of securing a home.

I boarded the train at Columbia and arrived at Quanah, Texas, April 10, 1889.

I walked from Quanah to Kemp's place and went to work on the farm for him for fifteen dollars a month and my board.

I left my wife and three months old baby girl in Columbia South Carolina. They stayed there for six months before I got money enough to send for them.

My wife thought Oklahoma was the most terrible place she had ever seen. We did not have anything to start house-keeping with but two trunks and a few bed clothes.

I filed on a place three miles northwest of Russell, bought an old crib from Kemp Lanford to make a dugout with.

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Kemp gave us an old stove and a bedstead and I made a dining table.

A few days after we had settled in our dugout there was an awful sand storm; the red dirt around our dugout was just rolling. I had gone over to Kemp's place and when I came home my wife had been crying and there were streaks of dirt on her face and about her eyes where the tears had rolled down her cheeks.

I built a tank in the little creek near our dugout and we drank water from it. It was gyp water at that.

I had no way of making any money and food got awfully scarce with us at times. I twisted rabbits out of holes until they got too smart for me. We ate them boiled with a little salt in the water. I'm telling you we got awfully tired of rabbit.

Wiley Meadows gave me some corn to grind for meal. I took it to the mill and gave him half of the meal.

Jim Long gave us some potatoes.

Kemp Lanford ran a little store at Russell but we were too proud to let him know we were in such hard circumstances.

At two different times at the end of the year I owed Kemp Lanford five dollars for groceries. We managed to get

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along without buying any more groceries on time.

Kemp furnished tools and teams for me to make the first crop. I broke out a small patch and planted feed.

Each year I broke out a little more land until I had thirty or forty acres in cultivation.

On one occasion there was a big rain and water ran through our dugout and just made a little stream through it. Our bedding got wet. All this added to my wife's dissatisfaction.

In 1890 I traded an overcoat for a horse, then gave Kemp Lanford four dollars for a gilt.

I kept the gilt until she had seven pigs, then traded the gilt and pigs for a pony. Then I traded one of the horses for an old horse and a wagon. I was surely proud of my wagon and team.

I hauled some freight from Juanah and exchanged work for groceries. Everything came in barrels those days. I remember hauling three barrels of syrup at one time.

Sometimes it would take three or four days to make the trip.

My wife's relatives sent us some dishes and cooking utensils from South Carolina.

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We had been here two years before we owned any chairs.

I went to Juannah to haul freight and bought two chairs.

In 1901 I bought a new walking cultivator and paid twenty-five dollars for it. And I traded Pack Posten a blue serge coat for twenty-seven bushels of corn.

Wiley Meadows had lots of good corn and he burned long nice ears for fuel. It was cheaper than to buy fuel.

I had some nice blackjack wood growing on my place, so I kept these blackjacks trimmed so they would grow large and soon I would have plenty of wood and when I sold out to Dan Miller he had the blackjacks all cut down.

After I sold out to Dan Miller I bought out the other heirs to my father's claim and have lived on it ever since.

We have a family burial ground on my place. I'll be buried there but my wife still has a dislike for Oklahoma and does not want to be buried here.

I have an eight dollar Ingersoll watch which belonged to my father; also a sword my father got in the Civil War. It is in good condition, although maybe it needs polishing a little.

My wife has a small trunk which is made of rawhide and was the property of her grandmother who brought it over from England.

This little trunk was used to keep valuable papers in. It is over a hundred years old. I would not part with any of these things.

There are some Indian graves down on Frank Thompson's place on Salt Fork River.