

LABOR, HENRY

INTERVIEW

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

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Field Worker's name Johnson H. Hampton

This report made on (date) March 21 1938

1. Name Henry Labor, a part-blood Chectaw

2. Post Office Address Miller, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 17 Year 1891

5. Place of birth near Smithville

6. Name of Father William Labor Place of birth Smithville

Other information about father _____

7.- Name of Mother Pheba Labor Place of birth Smithville

~~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 _____

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Johnson H. Hampton,
Investigator,
March 21, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. Henry Labor,
Miller, Oklahoma.

I was born June 17, 1891, near where Smithville is now but at that time there was no Smithville. My father was raised near this place and my mother was raised there too. My father's name was William Labor and Mother's name was Pheba Labor and they were both raised near Smithville. ~~Father was of Spanish descent but my mother was a~~ full blood Indian. Grandfather came from Louisiana and to the Nation and located in those mountains in the eastern part of the Nation and there the whole Labor family lived ~~at one time and they then began to scatter out into other~~ parts of the country. I was born near Smithville; the family consisted of nine girls and one boy and after I grew up to be a pretty good sized boy we then moved from Nashoba County as it was called then and moved to Blue County, now Bryan County; that is where I was raised to manhood and I lived there for several years and then moved to Pushmataha County where I am now living.

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When we left Nashoba County and came to Blue County, we located on the prairie, as being Choctaws, we had a right to locate anywhere we found the land suitable for location and under the Choctaw law regarding the land it was against the law for any one to locate within four hundred and forty yards of a house but if you located at that distance or farther away it was all right so we found a place and located on this place; we did not bring any furniture with us for we did not have much anyway and we came over in an ox wagon to this place so we did not have much furniture with us when we came but we soon bought enough for us to make out on. We built a log house and lived in it for several years before we built a lumber house; we then put some land in cultivation where we raised corn and some wheat and the like. The county was fine at that time; the grass was good and there were plenty of other things besides grass for stock to eat and they roamed the range. We did not have to feed the stock at all during the winter season. Every Indian in that part of the country had cattle, hogs and ponies; we had cattle and hogs but we did not raise any ponies. That whole

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country was full of cattle at that time but there was no market for them so we had to ship them to the market but we realized very little for them. We made lots of corn on the place and raised good wheat; we sold our wheat to people in Bonham, Texas, but at that time wheat did not bring but very little but we got the money for what we did sell. My father being part Spanish had the advantage over the Choctaws in that country and as he was a good worker and a good manager it did not take him very long to accumulate right smart property around him.

My mother had a spinning wheel but she did not have a loom nor a weaver; she would use a card and card the cotton and wool; she then would get her knitting needles and knit the cotton and wool into socks and mittens. She never made any clothes that I know of but she would dye the threads before she knit them and after she got the socks and mittens knitted they were just the same as store bought stuff, heavy and thick and they were warm in the winter. Mother used to sell them to the neighbors for about 50 cents for both socks

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and mittens but she never did make any pottery ~~that I know~~
~~of and I don't remember seeing anyone making pottery but I~~
have seen it for Mother used to have a piece of pottery.
It was a five gallon jar but I don't remember what became
of it after she died.

I was enrolled with the other Choctaws at the time the
Dawes Commission was in this country enrolling the Choctaws,
and I was allotted land and also got the payments that the
Choctaws got. We got several payments about the time
Woodrow Wilson was President but we have not gotten any more
payments for a long time. I did not know that we had an
Indian Agency until after we made our allotments of land; I
guess we had one but I never heard of it until then and I
don't think that many Choctaws knew about it until after the
allotment when the papers begin to come from the Union
Agency from Muskogee. The shipping point as I said was at
Denison, Texas, and we used to ship from there because from the
place where we all lived it was closer than Durant, and we
did not have to wait long to get cars for our cattle to load
and get them on the way to the market.

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I used to attend the Indian Camp meetings at ~~Chishoktak, this is the name of the place in Choctaw~~ but in English it would be Post oak Prairie; it was a Presbyterian Indian Church. this church is still being used. This church was there when I was a boy and it is still there and being used, but the Choctaws are about all gone now who used to attend this church. I have been to their cries; they used to have their cries at the Church and sometimes they would have a cry at the grave of the person who had died several months before that or maybe sometimes it would be about six months or a year after a person died before they would have those cries.

I attended the Jones Academy for about two years and I went to Armstrong Academy for some time. I then went back to Jones Academy where I got my eighth grade diploma and went to several neighborhood schools before I finally quit going to school. I can read and write in the English language but I am unable to read or write in the Choctaw language.

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In the way of relics I have a cupboard that Mother used to use and a high chair that my father made for us children which is very old, and I have a handsaw that Father got from Grandfather which is about a hundred years old.

I am part Spanish descent and part Choctaw Indian, all of my people on my father's side were mixed up with Spanish blood but Mother was a full blood Choctaw Indian and I have lived with my tribe all of my life and the balance of my people have lived with the Choctaws until they have all about died out although there are a few of the younger ones living but the older ones are all dead and I am living near Miller Post Office at this time.

Note: Johnson H. Hampton, an Indian, writes his interview as it is given to him by his Indian friends and as he himself, expresses ideas. In this manuscript no change was made as the repetition of ideas, etc., seemed of value. Ed.