

LANNING, DANIEL KINSLEY INTERVIEW
BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

6830

Field Worker's name Wylie Thornton

This report made on (date) July 21 1937

1. Name Daniel Kinsley Lanning

2. Post Office Address Tahlequah, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 9th Year 1859

5. Place of birth Butler, Indiana

6. Name of Father Joseph Randolph Lanning Place of birth In Pennysl-
vania

Other information about father Did not enter Civil War, he was
a druggist.

7. Name of Mother Margrett Deters Lanning Place of birth _____

Other information about mother Died in Maresville, Indiana
near Auburn, Indiana.

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 7.

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Wylie Thorten,
Interviewer,
July 21, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. Daniel Kinsley
Lanning, Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

Some of the experiences of Mr. Lanning
In the Early Life of the Cherokee
Nation.

I came to Tahlequah, Indian Territory, in the early part of May, 1894. I remember so well that Bob Fuller and I were standing somewhere between the court house front doors and that big post-oak tree toward the stores when the wagons and teams came trotting up with the commission for the Cherokee Strip payment. I also remember that I had been here only a few days when that happened. That payment began at once and such stirring among the people you will never see again, and the worst part of it all is the way the Indians wasted their money. They bought guns and cartridges and shot them out at trees and at each other.

When I first landed here I found lodging with Bob Fuller; he had a hotel located just east of where

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the Washington Motor Company is now and I worked for him as a saddle and harness-maker. I cut the leather out myself and sewed it up into two kinds of saddles. I made side saddles for men and I made saddles and fine bridles and straps for spurs. I sold women's saddles for seven dollars each and the prices of men's saddles went from seven dollars each as high up as seventy-five dollars each, and fine spurs sold for two dollars and a half each.

During the payment, I had as many as six other men helping me sew up the leather which I had cut out into saddles and then we could not make nearly as many as we could have sold. We made lots of money, Bob Fuller almost got rich on that shop. It was located in a fifteen by fifteen foot room at one corner of the hotel, right up against the sidewalk, or rather on a dirt path near the hotel.

We had no banks at this time but as I remember old John W. Stapler had a big store right where the

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First National Bank is now. He had a way of letting you leave your money in there and he would give you checks which looked like brass for your money and once I left my money with him and in a few days I asked Bob Fuller what was I going to do for money, I wanted to buy a coat and vest and all I had was a pocket full of those old brass checks, and Bob laughed and said "Well Daniel I believe you could trade them for a coat and vest, "so I went to see if I could, and sure enough I did.

I think Stapler must have had a big iron box to put all the money in, and pretty soon everybody knew that Stapler's brass checks were good, and everybody had a pocket full of them and used them to buy anything they wanted all around the country. Then after a few years, John Stapler put in a bank sure enough in an old brick building about where Hinds' Store is now.

I very often helped move large sums of money

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from Tahlequah to Fort Gibson for different men. I don't know what they did with the money after we got it over there. I think they probably took it with them on the train to some big town away up north to buy goods for their stores down here. Those men away up north who furnished these men down here with all this stuff would not risk the money ever getting to them; because there were too many out-laws around here. If the Cook Boys found out about this money coming in or going out they would get it before it reached Fort Gibson or got down here to Tahlequah. One time I remember Jim Stapler, the son of John Stapler, the big merchant, wanted to go away north somewhere and he wanted to catch a train at Fort Gibson early one morning, so he came to me to help him get over there with a lot of money. I said, "why don't you get ~~Pete~~ Pete Sparks, the regular bus driver for John Wilson's Livery Barn to take you" and he said, "No I want you", so I told him to be ready to start about eleven o'clock that night, so I picked

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him up at his house at eleven o'clock. He came out with a big satchel full of greenbacks and he had a lawyer with him, but the lawyer's name I cannot remember but I believe it was Thompson. We started out and just as we topped a long hill this side of Fort Gibson we saw the Cook Gang standing right in the middle of the road holding their horses. I said "Whoa!" to my sweating team. I had been getting over the road mighty fast. These fellows jumped up, threw the satchel which was full of money under my seat, and grabbed their guns. They had just been bragging about how they were ready to kill all the Cook Gang if they got a sight of them. I got my horses stopped and when Jim Cook saw who I was, he began to talk to the rest of them and pretty soon he said "Go ahead Daniel we don't want to bother you" and I said "Thank you Jim". Jim stayed around me a great deal, he was a close friend of mine, I used to take him to Zeke Crittendon's house out here close

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to Melvin Station. We would go every few nights. Zeke Crittendon's wife was a sort of mother to all these outlaws; her name was Effie. It was a very common thing to hear "Cherokee Bill" or Jim Cook say "Let's go out to Effie's" to one another and away they would go on horseback. They always traveled one away ahead of the others to spy out the road, but the funniest thing of it all is how they would come to town here and go up and down the streets just as unconcerned as if they were business men, and ^{would} we say "There goes one of those Cook gangsters". I got acquainted with them right after I came here, in 1894, and that near scrape on the trip to Fort Gibson with Jim Stapler was in 1896. I sold pretty nearly every saddle that gang used.

I am sure Johnny Adair was the first postmaster in Tahlequah, and the next postmaster was Bob Ross, and the best I can remember Judge Hughes was the

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first mayor and I believe the next was Judge Pitchford; you see back in those days the Mayor was always the judge. I have been here since 1894 and expect to die here.