

LAWLEY, CLAUDE H.

INTERVIEW

9114

451

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

LAWLEY, CLAUDE H.

INTERVIEW

9116

Field Worker's name Ruby Wolfenbarger

This report made on (date) October 28 1937

1. Name Claude H. Lawley

2. Post Office Address Sentinel, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 9 Year 1875

5. Place of birth Mississippi

6. Name of Father John Lawley Place of birth Alabama

Other information about father Farmer and cattleman

7. Name of Mother Bell Wooten Place of birth Alabama

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 _____.

Ruby Wolfenbarger
Investigator
October 28, 1937

Interview with
Claude H. Lawley
Sentinel, Oklahoma.

I was born in Mississippi in 1875. I moved with my parents to Arkansas in about 1888. The climate there didn't agree with me. So in 1900, with another party, my wife and I started for Indian Territory. We were about ten days on the road. We had a stove in our wagon. We killed a hawk on the way and cooked it but I didn't care for that kind of meat although the others seemed to think that it was real good.

We located at Dustin in the southeastern part of the territory. There were lots of Indians around that part of the country. They lived in tepees. They had fences built around their tepees. They built a big fire in the middle of the tent, which they kept burning all the time. All the Indians wore beaded moccasins and wooden shoes. They were lazy; would not work at anything. They begged for tobacco and corn meal.

- 2 -

I rented four hundred acres of land from an old Indian man. Our home was a small two room shack, not very good nor very sanitary. Our furniture consisted of a wooden bed, home-made chairs and table, an old fashioned cupboard, two trunks and a cook stove.

For fuel we burned wood which we hauled twenty-one miles; we had to get it from the mountains.

We got our drinking water from a spring. We had a good well but the water tasted like soda. We let the stock drink this water. Some of our neighbors didn't have any water at all.

I planted cotton, corn, maize and kafir. I didn't put all my land in cultivation the first year. We always raised lots of tomatoes, potatoes and all kinds of other vegetables.

My wife had lots of chickens and geese. We made feather beds out of goose feathers. We got three cents a dozen for our eggs. My wife would take the eggs to town and exchange them for calico.

- 3 -

We also had twelve good milk cows. These cows kept the table well supplied with good wholesome milk and butter.

My father had a grist mill near our home. We always kept a fresh supply of corn meal in the house. We gave some meal to our neighbors-as they needed it. We also put up a sorghum mill in the Fall and made syrup for ourselves and for the people in that community.

We put up enough meat and lard in the winter to last us a year. We made coffee out of parched corn and kafir seed in the early days. We made lye out of ashes; vinegar out of apples and soda out of ashes from cobs. About the only thing that was scarce in the early days was matches. The only ones that we had-were made of sulphur. Every night before we went to bed we built up a fire out of stumps so that we would have fire the next morning and also to save our matches.

About the only entertainments that we had were

- 4 -

singings and ice cream suppers.

I sent my children to school at Dustin. It was a consolidated school and was very good for that day and time.

The first church house in that community was built on my land. My family and I have never missed very many Sundays without attending Church some place.

We had lots of cold weather in the early days; lots of high winds, snowstorms and hailstorms, and the country was full of very dangerous and poisonous snakes then.

I stayed on this farm near Dustin until 1928, then I sold out and moved to Sentinel where I now live. I am enjoying the very best of health.