

WARD, JOHN

INTERVIEW

7656

163

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

WARD, JOHN

INTERVIEW

7656

Field Worker's name Etta D. Mason,

This report made on (date) September 17, 1937.

1. Name John Ward,

2. Post office address Chickasha, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: nth. _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father Sam Ward Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Leza Tiner Ward Place of birth _____

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 4

WARD, JOHN

INTERVIEW

7656

Etta D. Mason,
Field Worker,
September 17, 1937

An Interview with John Ward,
Chickasha, Oklahoma.

My father was Sam Ward and my mother was Loza Tinor Ward.

My father built most of the bridges and water mills in this part of the county. He built and operated the toll bridge here at Atoka and also had the stage line station here.

We lived at Soggy Depot first and then moved here. My father died when I was a young man, but I was old enough to help around the stage line station and at the bridge.

I remember at one time when the stage coach was within a mile of Atoka, coming from the west, that Cole Younger and his band held it up, killed the driver, robbed the mail sacks, took the best horses and rode away, leaving the dead man lying in the road.

A few hours afterward the news of the robbery was reported to my father and he and I went to the scene of the tragedy. My father took the body of the dead man

WARD, JOHN

INTERVIEW

7636

-2-

to the stage station, but before the man could be buried, father had to get the news to Fort Smith, Arkansas, and as there were no telephones or telegraphs, he had to ride horseback there and back. He was told by the officers at Fort Smith to bury the man on the spot on which he was killed. There was no cemetery at Atoka at that time.

Father died and I took his place as best I could. This was still a wild country and we people who wanted law and order had our hands full.

Men such as Cyrus Kingbury, Allen Wright, W. J. Haskins, Curran Ball, Alfred Wright, Cyrus Byington and many others were among the real builders of Oklahoma.

Haskins gained notice by capturing a liquor plant in the mountains near Atoka. This was a very important capture because the plant was so large and the men operating it were so influential with their own class that the capture nearly ended the making of liquor in the mountains near Atoka.

Haskins was also head of the Police Department of Atoka and did more to enforce the liquor laws than any other one person connected with the law in this part

WARD, JOHN

INTERVIEW

7658

-3-

of the country.

The first church bell ever brought to this country was one bought by the Masons and used in their hall at Boggy Depot. The bell was shipped to Kansas City and had to be hauled in a wagon from there to Boggy Depot. My father furnished the oxen to haul the bell with. It took two yoke of oxen to make the trip. After the lodge was dissolved at Loggy Depot, the bell was given to an Indian Baptist Church at Standing Rock. I do not know where the bell is now.

Standing Rock is eight miles west of Atoka in Atoka County.

There was a ferryboat on the Delaware river or creek where it runs into Boggy Creek about a mile north of Boggy Depot.

The ferryboat was operated when the water was low by poles, but when the water was high, we used a cable to pull the boat across.

There was an Indian ceremonial ground at Black Gum Springs where the Indians met for councils and for other ceremonies.

WARD, JOHN

INTERVIEW

7656

-4-

Black Gum Springs are located about four miles south of Loggy Depot in Atoka County. There was also an Indian mission called Black Jack House. This place is about two miles west of Tushka in Atoka County.

Nearly all my life has been spent in Oklahoma. I was a cowboy and helped to drive cattle to Caldwell, Kansas, and to other shipping points. I drove cattle with "Bill the Kid" before he became a desperado. I knew the Turnbull outlaws, the Daltons and all the others who roamed this country at that time. I never had any trouble with any of them but have befriended them often.

I have been a stockman and farmer, too. At one time I had twenty-one hundred head of cattle at Cardville.

Oklahoma has surely had a career but it was not true that the Territory was filled with renegades and outlaws. People who settled here were of good substantial stock who were just trying to better their condition in a new country.