

DENSON, O. J.

INTERVIEW

#1303

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

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Field Worker's name John Daugherty

This report made on (date) April 23 1937

1. Name O.J. Denson

2. Post Office Address Wynnwood, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Route 3

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month Unknown Day Unknown Year 1859

5. Place of birth Georgetown, Texas

6. Name of Father R. K. Denson Place of birth Alabama

Other information about father Stockman and Farmer

7. Name of Mother Rebekah F. Denson Place of birth Arkansas

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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John F. Daugherty,  
Field Worker,  
April 23, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. O. J. Denson,  
Wynnewood, Oklahoma.

My name is O. J. Denson. I was born in 1859 in Georgetown, Texas. My parents were R. K. and Rebekah Thermond Denson. My father was born in Alabama in 1824. When he was a child his parents moved to Mississippi, and here he was reared. Mother was born in Arkansas in 1827. I have five brothers and seven sisters.

Father was a farmer and stockman until he moved to Georgetown, Texas. Here he ran a hotel.

I was married in 1880 to Sarah Owens who was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1861. I am the father of nine children; three boys and six girls.

I had a brother living near Springer, so I decided to move there too, in 1894. We came in covered wagons. My brother-in-law was in one and I in the other. Our families were with us. It took us thirteen days to make the trip.

Our first home was a log cabin with two rooms. It had a dirt floor and was heated with a fireplace. We lived one mile south of Springer, on Buzzard Creek. We had to haul

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our water from a dug well a mile away.

I raised cotton and livestock. I lived here two years and moved close to Cumberland Hill on the Washita on Governor Ben Burney's place. He was a full blood Choctaw and one of the finest men I ever knew. I hadn't lived here long until I discovered we were in a settlement of desperadoes and cattle thieves. I was watched constantly. I could never ride away without being shadowed, and they would come to my house at night and peek in to see what we were doing. I later found out that they thought that I was a Government spy. One woman asked me if I was the one to get her husband. He had committed a crime in the East and moved here to escape punishment by law. I lived here two years during which time I raised cattle, hogs and corn. I had many friends among the full bloods, some of them being Governor Ben Burney of the Chickasaws, Thomas and I. Hunter Pickins, John Brown and his wife, Frank and Ben Colbert, and George Holland.

One day I was feeling rather discouraged. The thieves were stealing all I had, and I was sitting on a log whittling

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when some one rode up behind me. It was a full blood named Pickins. I just sat there, and so did he for what seemed to me many minutes. At last he got down off his pony and came and sat on the log with me. I spoke to him, but he only grunted. He sat there for a long time and at last said "Mebbe so see cabin over there", I nodded "Mebbe so move there and stay as long as you like."

So I moved on to Tom Pickin's place, which was a log house with a dirt floor, and no chimney. So I built a cat chimney with sticks, dirt, ashes and grass. The frame was built by putting four posts, one at each corner of the chimney. It was latticed with split sticks from top to bottom. Then cat tails consisting of dirt, grass, ashes mixed with water are hung on to each lattice and, plastered on the stick inside and out.

I lived here for four years and moved to Pauls Valley where I lived until my wife died, and since then I have lived with my son Finis near Sulphur.

My grandfather made an agreement with the United

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states Government to move the Choctaw Indians to Boggy Depot near Durant, over the Trails of Tears, in 1838. I have heard my father tell of the terrible suffering and many deaths along the Trail of Tears.

My mother's grandfather named Pennington was reared among the Indians of Mississippi. He was so well thought of among them, that they held a Choctaw Cry at his grave when he died.