

DOWNING, AMANDA JOHNSON.

INTERVIEW

5840

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

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Field Worker's name George Littlejohn

This report made on (date) May 17, 1937

1. Name Mrs . Amanda Johnson Downing

2. Post Office Address Short, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1870

5. Place of birth North Carolina

6. Name of Father Zeak Johnson Place of birth North Carolina

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Nancy Raddler Johnson 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 _____.

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George Littlejohn
Field Worker
May 17, 1937

Interview with Amanda Johnson Downing
Short, Oklahoma

I left North Carolina in 1874, thirty-two years after the drive which was known as the Trail of Tears.

There was a man sent from Oklahoma to North Carolina where a few of us still remained. The man's name was Mr. Punch, I don't remember his given name. He came to North Carolina for the purpose of telling us about the new country, Oklahoma. He made speeches and told us all about Oklahoma. Of course, we had to come and see! Oh, it was awful to give our place up and take a chance on getting another one like it. We had to give up our friends and relatives. Some women left husbands and husbands left wives.

It was best that we came where we could own our land again. The day before we left, we had a farewell stomp dance. The next day we started walking. We walked for many miles before we came to a railroad station.

We landed in Oklahoma, near Stilwell, the same year. We never did work, we got a small payment from

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the Government after we got here. We would have to go to Tahlequah to get the money. The way we would bring the money back was six or seven families would go in a bunch, only one wagon. Just the driver would ride in the wagon, the rest would ride horses and carry guns to protect the wagon. We had a big trunk in the wagon with all our money in it.

Not many years after we came to the Territory we headed south to pick cotton. We landed here at Short and have been here ever since.

We accepted our allotment and set to work to build homes and improve our land.