

EWALT, JOHN F.

INTERVIEW

8693

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

EWALT, JOHN F.

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Field Worker's name Ethel B. Taskitt,

This report made on (date) September 14, 193 7

Lone Wolf, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

1. Name John F. Ewalt,

2. Post Office Address Lone Wolf, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Route No. 3.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 15 Year 1859

5. Place of birth Missouri. Near St. Louis.

6. Name of Father Henry D. Ewalt Place of birth Virginia.

Other information about father Confederate Soldier. Killed in
Poison Springs, Arkansas, battle.

7. Name of Mother Corrella Covington Ewalt Place of birth Virginia

Other information about mother Member of Pioneer Family of
Old Virginia.

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 5.

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Ethel B. Tackitt,
Field Worker,
September 14, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. John F. Ewalt,
Route No. 3,
Lone Wolf, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

I was born in Missouri near St. Louis on January 15, 1859. My parents, Henry D. Ewalt and Currella Covington Ewalt, were members of pioneer families of Virginia. My father was a soldier in the Civil War serving with the Confederacy and was killed in battle near a place called Poison Springs in Arkansas. Our family moved to Texas in an early day after the Civil War and I lived there until I was grown and married.

I heard a great deal about the opening of Oklahoma, especially a lot about Greer County, which was under control of the cowmen but in 1898 I decided to come to Greer County and try to get some land and make a home for my family. I did not want to rent land in Texas always. So I left my family there and came to Greer County. The cowmen, as yet, had much of the land under fence and did not want settlers or "Nesters" in their pastures.

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I found a place three and one half miles east of Mangum in what is now called the City View Community and after managing around I got a little shack that I could move my family into. So I started back to Texas after them. The roads were mighty rough as little work had been done on them and Red River was crossed at Doan's Crossing by having straw scattered over the sand in the river bed to make the tracks firm enough so that a team of horses could pull a wagon across. If the load was very heavy often part of it had to be unloaded and several trips had to be made across the river which was the main Red River and was about a mile wide. As a general thing there were other wagons on both sides of the river all doing their best to make the crossing.

If Red River was dry or if there was only a small channel of water which was usually the case except when there was a rise or an overflow, the straw served pretty well as the fellow who kept the river "strawed" generally kept a team hitched up and would help pull the wagon across. For his services he was paid whatever he asked.

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and he got his pay for keeping the river "strawed" by collecting from 10 to 25 cents for everybody crossing on it. One of these men was Northcutt.

The freighters would help anybody across free of charge and a cowboy would have been insulted if anybody had offered to pay him for helping in crossing the river or anywhere else.

That year it seemed to me that the country settled up all at once; there were droves of wagons on the road when I started back to Texas after my family and I decided that I would stop and ask every one where they were going. It was the custom in those days when you met a traveler on the road for each one to pull up, pass the time of day and have a chat as there were not many people and we were all friendly and wanted to get acquainted with the new-comers. I was ten days on the road going down to Texas and I met forty-eight wagons and out of the forty-eight, forty-five of them were moving to Greer County and within the next year the country had settled up and taken on a different attitude.

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from the cowman's country which it had been previously.

When I got back we lived in the City View neighborhood and it soon became a farming community as it was in the sand and produced much better than the northwestern part of the county which remained under pasture and was used for stock farming. The big ranchmen were being forced out by the farmers. I made a living by freighting between Mangum and Quanah and Vernon, Texas, for Charley Hamilton who had a big mercantile business and bought and sold cotton and other produce. I hauled bales of cotton for \$1.50 and \$2.00 a bale and received \$5.00 per ton for hauling back coal. There was no railroad in Mangum then and everything was hauled by wagon and team.

Our community took great interest in protracted meetings and singings. Professor Burk was the leader in the musical gatherings and these were held in the homes usually during the week. The neighbors would gather in, coming in wagons and bringing their families, while the young folks came in buggies or on horseback

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and everybody would sing and laugh and talk and have a good time by the light of coal oil lamps in the house and lanterns on the outside until about ten o'clock, then everybody went home. On Sunday everybody went to preaching at the schoolhouse at eleven o'clock and stayed for the singing at three o'clock in the afternoon. Oftentimes there was dinner on the ground, brought by the families and everybody was welcome. Disturbance of any kind was very unusual and the person causing such disturbance was looked down upon.

I continued to farm in Greer County for a number of years then after the Opening of the Kiowa country, some of my children married and moved there, so later I came to Kiowa County and expect to live here the remainder of my life.