

McDANIEL, T. J.

INTERVIEW

12547

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

McDANIEL, T. J.

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Field Worker's name Johnson H. Hampton.

This report made on (date) December 29, 1937

1. Name Mr. T. J. McDaniel, A Pioneer.

2. Post Office Address Antlers, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 23 Year 1875.

5. Place of birth Texas.

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth Texas.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth Texas.

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 5.

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Johnson H. Hampton,
Investigator,
December 29, 1937.

An Interview with T. J. McDaniel,
Antlers, Oklahoma.

I was born September 23rd, 1875, in Texas, came to the Indian Territory, Choctaw Nation, in 1901, and located at Fort Towson. My father and mother lived and both died in Texas at the old home place and never did come to the Nation.

I came to this country with my family on the train. No one else came with us. I made up my mind that I could make a good living here for my family, which I did after so long a time. At the time I landed here there was a good opportunity for young men to start in life.

I rented a box house called a sawmill shack, which was made out of lumber cut at the mill. We had no furniture to speak of, so we had to buy what furniture we needed but we did not need very much furniture, just enough to get by on a camping outfit.

I got a job at the mill and went to work. This mill was owned by a man by the name of Ed Cravens. I worked at

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this mill for about two years; then he sold out to Wright and Leard, and I worked for them until they cut out what timber there was in that community and moved the mill. At that time the sawmills cut timber anywhere good timber could be found and this country had lots of fine yellow pine timber on the mountains and lots of white-oak timber also.

I worked around sawmills from the time I came to the Nation, never farming any to amount to anything except a garden.

Fort Towson was at that time only a sawmill town on the railroad. The old Fort Towson was about a mile or two north of where the present Fort Towson is.

About the only white people in the country at that time were those who worked at the mills and there were no farms in the country at that time.

Some time after this mill had moved from Fort Towson, the Choctaw Lumber Company came with their big mill and a big planer and operated there for a while. They hauled

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their pine logs with wagons. When they got all the timber they could get within reach, they then built a tramway out from Fort Towson into the mountains about ten miles and the log cutters camped at the end of this tramway which was called the front. When the logs were cut, they would haul the logs to the tramway and load them on the cars which brought the logs to the mill where they were cut and planed and loaded on the cars and shipped out of the country. When the pine timber was cut out, the Choctaw Lumber Company then moved their mills to ~~Wright City, where they built~~ a railroad into Broken Bow. They put up a big sawmill there also. The company bought all the timber in that part of the country and left all the little mills without any timber to cut.

In this part of the country the timber was fine large yellow pine but after the mills got through the timber was gone. There are several little sawmills in the country now but they are going to be all out in a little while for the timber is gone in this part of the country.

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After working at these sawmills I finally got to where I could buy a sawmill and bought one and operated it myself. I bought some timber, paying \$1.00 per thousand stumpage feet, and then I got a little planer and planed all the lumber I cut. I sold the planed lumber at from \$12.00 to \$20.00 per thousand feet, lumber at that time not being worth very much.

There used to be lots of wild game in the country—deer, turkey and lots of fish in the creeks when I came here but they are not here now since the white people began to settle the country. We used to go out and kill a deer or a turkey anywhere the mill hands lived.

The Choctaws lived in communities when I first came and houses were several miles apart, and there were no fences except around a small patch of about five acres on which the Choctaws raised their corn for their bread. They nearly all had hogs and cattle on the range, and lived on deer and turkeys most of the time. The Choctaw Indians worked very little but they did not have to work very much because they had their living in the woods.

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I have lived among the Choctaws ever since I came to this country, and in my time I have found them to be honest and law-abiding citizens. They never bothered anybody; they would fight among themselves and sometimes kill one another, but they did not bother the white people at all. I have traded with them, sold them lumber and bought stock from them and I found they would not tell a story about anything they did. I don't know how the younger generation are for I don't know many of the younger Choctaws. I have raised my children among these Indians, they have gone to school with them and have been around them ever since ^{they} have been here.

Years ago when we wanted to go anywhere we would just shut the door and go on- not lock anything up when the country was inhabited by the Choctaws. Now, it is different with the white people settled in the country, you can lock up everything, then they get in anyway and steal what you have. The country is different now days. I am now living in Antlers, Oklahoma.