

OWSLEY, ROBERT F. : INTERVIEW

12828

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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OWSLEY, ROBERT F.

INTERVIEW.

#12828

Field Worker's name Charles H. Holt

This report made on (date) January 25, 193 8

1. Name Robert F. Owsley

2. Post Office Address Hominy, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1862

5. Place of birth Missouri

6. Name of Father Anthony Owsley Place of birth Tennessee

7. Name of Mother Josephine Miller Place of birth Kentucky.

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 _____

An Interview with Robert F. Owsley, Hominy, Oklahoma.
By - Charles H. Holt, Investigator.
January 25, 1938.

I was born in Missouri in 1862 and in 1888 I got a job with Sam Kinkaid helping drive thirty-five head of shorthorn cattle from Missouri to Greer County in the Territory. I rode a mule on the entire trip. Out of Missouri we crossed southeast Kansas on election day when Harrison was elected President. I was a single man at that time. Five other men came on the trip, a covered wagon with supplies leading the way. After reaching the Territory south of Elgin or Coffeyville, Kansas, we continued south and reached the Arkansas River where the City of Tulsa now stands. As I recall there was only one store or trading post at that point then. The river was up slightly and Mr. Kinkaid gave a man there at Tulsa \$5.00 to help or show us the best crossing for the cattle. The crossing was made without any trouble and the trip was continued to the Southwest, but before reaching Greer County the Texas fever got into the herd of thirty-five cattle, and all died but four of them. We were just fifty or seventy-five miles from our destination, and Mr. Kinkaid had become

very discouraged, but continued on with the four head of cattle, which on arrival he sold or traded and returned to Missouri, but the bad luck with the cattle caused him to never return to the Territory again.

I stopped in the Territory and got a job on Al Herron's ranch as cowhand and doing general work on the Herron ranch which was in Greer County. After working several months for Herron, a neighbor told me that some of the cattle I had been driving in for Herron did not belong to him, so I took the neighbors word and quit the Herron ranch and later it was proven that Herron was only a cattle rustler.

I then got a job in that part of the Territory breaking horses for a man. The horses were mostly gotten in New Mexico and brought into the Territory and sold. I always went on the trips to New Mexico for horses and on one occasion we had to cross the Comanche Nation with thirty-seven head of horses and the Indians were more or less on the warpath and wanted to charge us \$1.00 per head to go through with the horses. Some people were paying the Indians, but the man I was with refused and went to Fort Sill and an officer there sent a scout or soldier with them and the horses were taken through without the payment demanded by the Indians.

On this trip while on the Washita River I saw what I thought to be a fawn or small deer, it being in grass and brush I gave chase, but it proved to be a large wild cat. I also encountered my first rattlesnake on this trip. It had ten rattles and I killed the snake with a club, but a man with me told me that he always killed with his heel by stomping the snake and later the man did kill a rattler by stomping it.

On one trip with a bunch of horses we were camped for the night and during the night Indians stole five or six head of our horses. Next morning when the horses were missed we made a search and got on the trail of the Indians, overtook them and got the horses back without the Indians making any fight. I worked for the man in the horse business for four or five years.

I went back to Missouri and married in 1894, then decided to return to the Territory at once, which I did, and settled in the Osage country near Hominy. The trip was made in a covered wagon, bringing only camping equipment and some bedding.

I began farming - leasing land from the Osages and farm-

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ing in a small way the first two years. When I had made
enough to get more stock and farming equipment I farmed more
land and continued farming in the Osage country until a few
years ago when I had to retire on account of my health.