

OWENS, ALFRED

INTERVIEW

1298

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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name John F. Dougherty

This report made on (date) April 29, 1937

1. Name Alfred Owens,

2. Post Office Address Sulphur, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 28 Year 1863

5. Place of birth Georgia

6. Name of Father William Owens Place of birth Georgia

Other information about father Farmer and Saloon Keeper

7. Name of Mother Mary Owens Place of birth Georgia

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 4.

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John F. Dougherty,  
Field Worker,  
April 29, 1937.

An Interview with  
Alfred Owens,  
Sulphur, Oklahoma.

My father was William Owens. He was born in Georgia in September, 1827. My mother was Mary McLeard Owens. She was also born in Georgia. My father farmed some and ran a saloon. There were three boys and one girl.

I was born July 28, 1863 in Georgia. I thought this was a better country than Georgia, so I moved to Sulphur in July 1889. I came with an uncle and a cousin in a covered wagon from Texas. It took four days to make the trip. We came by Durant, crossing Red River at the mouth of Island-Bayou. We forded the river at this place. After passing Durant, we came to Caddo. We crossed Blue River at Nail Crossing. We went through Twelve Mile Prairie and crossed the Washita River at Fort Washita. We then went to Mannsville, to Durwood, Provine and thence to Ardmore.

Ardmore had only one store at this time, run by Zuckerman. I well remember my first night at Ardmore. They were having a celebration in honor of the Santa Fe Railroad,

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which had not been built so long before this. We decided we liked this location. My uncle was looking for grass for his cattle, and this seemed to be the right spot, so we settled near here. I lived here for ten years.

I began teaching a subscription school here. Each child paid  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cents per day to attend. We ran out of water and had to dismiss at the end of three months. The building was a log house about twenty feet long by sixteen feet wide. It had a board floor, and benches made of boards. We had a stove and used wood for fuel. We had a blackboard which I made out of one by twelve boards painted black. I made my own paint out of linseed oil and lamp black.

I had some full blood Indian children in my school, among them were the D. D. Cotton children and Charley Brown's children.

My first wife was a full blood Chickasaw. Her name was Margaret Albertson. She is buried at Old Kuch, southeast of Berwyn on the Washita River.

I built a good frame house on a quitclaim near Ardmore. It had a basement and was weatherboarded and ceiled. It had

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a stone chimney.

I had good farming tools, and always made good crops in those days.

After I had been here a few years a friend from Georgia came to see me. He wanted to see the country, so we got on some ponies and rode around. We got to Lige, Albertson's house and heard of an Indian Pashofa dance which was to be held that night. My friend was very eager to see that, so we made our way to the camp where it was to be. These dances were held when a member of the tribe was very ill. This time the man who was sick was Thompson Pickins. When we got there the Indians had a spot of ground all cleaned off with a striped pole at each end. We started to ride across it, and an Indian told us to stay off that plot of ground if we didn't want to be shot.

At last the dance started. They used drums for their music, and sang weird songs. They kept a pot of medicinal tea brewing on a fire around which they danced. The sick man was in a little log hut, and they gave him this tea to drink. This produced a sweat, which was supposed to cure

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him. My friend thought it quite a jubilee over a sick man. They danced until midnight, when they began serving the Pashofa, which had been cooking in a pot for hours. This was corn cooked with fresh pork, and was a great dish among the Indians. They danced and ate Pashofa the rest of the night. The women wore terrapin shells with pebbles in them, buckled around their ankles, and these rattled as they danced. We left about daylight, and my friend decided that was one dance which he would never forget.

I was married the second time in Carter County to Bendy Lewis, a Chickasaw full blood woman, granddaughter of Ex-Governor Harris. We have lived in Murray County in Sulphur, for the past ten years.