

ODELL, J. B.

INTERVIEW

9654

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

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Field Worker's name Ruby Wolfenbarger

This report made on (date) January 13, 1938.

1. Name J. B. Odell

2. Post Office Address Sentinel,

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 6 Year 1867

5. Place of birth Tennessee

6. Name of Father G. W. Odell Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father Farmer and doctor.

7. Name of Mother Jane Wood Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information about mother Housewife

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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Ruby Wolfenbarger,
Investigator.
January 13, 1938.

Interview with J. B. Odell.
Sentinel, Oklahoma
Born March 6, 1867
Father-C. W. Odell
Mother-Jane Wood

I came to the Indian Territory in 1900. My wife and I came on the train to Mountain View and were met there by my wife's brother. who carried us to his home up in the Cheyenne country. We made the trip to his home in a covered wagon; progress was very slow. He bought a big supply of groceries while in Mountain View. The first night we camped at Rocky where we found plenty of grass and water for our cattle.

Our reason for coming up here was to homestead. My wife wanted to come because all of her people were up here. I had always wanted to go west to live. We stayed with my brother-in-law for about two weeks, I went to Cheyenne and filed on land and the papers were sent to El Reno. Several days later I located two miles north of Cheyenne. I could stand on the courthouse steps in Cheyenne and look into my front door. Fifteen acres of my land were rich

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valley land and I had about twenty acres of good grazing land for my cattle. I fenced part of my land but I did not plant any crops the first year except feed and cane to make sorghum molasses.

The north side of my land was very hilly and this was where I built my home. I built my house into one of these hills. I covered the top of it with rock that I found near my land. We had a hard dirt floor, two windows and one door. The house was very small, but warm.

We burned wood, had plenty of it, most of which we hauled from the Washita River. We suffered for drinking water and for our household needs. We hauled water from Cheyenne about once a week. I dug a well about one hundred feet deep, but I never found any water. There was a little hill near my place which covered about two acres of land, neighbors said that it had been there for over forty-five years; this hill extended almost straight up into the sky. At the top there were two little cedar trees and a fine spring of water. I dug on one side of this hill and my neighbor dug on the other but we never struck water.

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There were lots of fish in the Washita River, also plenty of wild game such as quail, rabbits, prairie chickens, and turkeys. We had two tame deer which stayed around our place, neighbors said that they had been around there for several years. Sometimes a panther went through the country at night. They scream just like a woman crying for help and it was ^avery lonesome and weird sound to hear in the night. They always sounded near, but they were miles way. We had to watch our chickens to keep the coyotes from eating them.

I went to Canadian City, Texas, after our groceries, this was about sixty miles from Cheyenne. Sometimes I went to El Reno but we had to cross the Canadian River. This River was very deep and very swift, no bridges and was quicksand. Lots of the settlers lost stock in the river.

Our school was in Snaky Bend, it got its name from the river, which looked like a snake wending its way along. We had a Union Sunday School and Church in our home. Later the neighbors of the community built a church.

We had lots of picnics and big barbecues at Cheyenne; this was the main shipping point for the cattlemen in the early days.

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There were lots of Indians located at Hammon, just a few miles from Cheyenne.

I hauled freight from Canadian, Texas, to Sayre to help out with our expense at home. I also cut stove wood and sold it. Money was very scarce in the early times.

We didn't have much rain in the early day, but had lots of sandstorms and blizzards. We had a big flood in June of one year and it didn't rain again until April of the next year.

We got our only paper from Cheyenne, and our nearest telephone was at El Reno.

I lived at Cheyenne for about fifteen years, then sold out and moved to Hobart and lived there for several years and worked at the ice plant. I later moved to Sentinel where I now make my home.