

HARPER, GEORGE.

INTERVIEW

7317

116

BIOGRAPHIC FORMS
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Planner History Project for Oklahoma

HARPER, GEORGE

INTERVIEW

#7317

Field Worker's name Charline M. Gilbertson.

This report made on (date) August 23, 1937

1. Name George Harper

2. Post Office Address Harpers Valley, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 1 1/2 miles east.

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

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Mary Jane Harper Place of birth _____

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.

HARPER, GEORGE

INTERVIEW

#7317

Charline M. Culbertson
Field Worker
August 23, 1937

An interview with George Harper
Harpers Valley (1½ miles east).

I came to the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory in 1888 with my mother, Mary Jane Harper and my two brothers, Ephraim and Isom Harper. We located near Berwyn, ten miles north of Ardmore. We came from Texas in a covered wagon; mother selling her farm in Texas thinking she would have a better chance here in the Territory of making a living. She also was going to make the Run into old Oklahoma but it was so rough that she decided not to. No other families moved with us. Mother brought a mare with her from Mississippi to Texas then to the Territory and I have raised over a hundred head and am still raising from the same stock.

Our first home in the Territory was a little log hut near a large Indian ranch close to Oil Spring. A fullblood Chickasaw Indian ranchman named Tubbee Cutch was very prejudiced against the whites for coming in and fencing up the Indians land. The first year we lived at this particular place our house was burned by these Indians, because mother

HARPER, GEORGE

INTERVIEW

#7317

-2-

began fencing up some land and the Indians were not in favor of this. There was also another Indian ranch near our place, which was called the C-T ranch and was owned by an old Chickasaw woman. She handled about 5,000 head of cattle a year. The foreman's name was Jewel Ceily. One time this old lady was robbed. The robbers broke into her house and demanded that she should tell where her money was and she would not. At that time she would talk English. The robbers took her near the fire place and put turpentine on her feet and began to bake her feet and of course she had to give up and tell them the money was in the second story of the house and was about \$1,000. After that she never talked English any more.

The cattlere never fed but would keep fat on the range. Fat yearlings sold for \$6.00 a head. I never did much trading with the Indians.

In 1892 I moved to Krebs where I dug coal and bought a little farm from a brother who was an intermarried citizen. I live on this little farm at present. The place

HARPER, GEORGE

INTERVIEW

#7317

-3-

is one mile and half from Harpers Valley which was named after this brother from whom I bought the farm. However, prior to this it was called View Springs.

In 1894 I owed a debt to Mr. Smith, the MK&T railroad president; so to pay him he hired me to go on a hunting and fishing trip with him and several other railroad officials and my job was to cook. To pay someone in this way we called "working out dead horse." Game was plentiful in those days as there were many deer, turkey and fish. On that trip we killed seven deer. We fished on Gaines Creek north of McAlester and this might sound like a fish story but I can furnish witnesses that on a fishing trip on Gaines Creek we caught 4,000 pounds of fish. There was a head rise on this creek and we loaded several hundred pounds of the fish into wagons and took them to McAlester and Krebs to sell.

United States Marshals were always used in taking pay rolls to the mines. However no one was ever harmed.

HARPER, GEORGE

INTERVIEW

#7317

-4-

There were many horse thieves about the Territory at this time. Davis and Poe were the names of two and my brother was in a battle with them one time after they had stolen a pony from him. Oftentimes when horse thieves were caught they were shot and nothing more was said of the killing. The Indians were peaceful, more so than the whites.

I stayed all night with a Chickasaw Indian family one night while out to buy some cattle. I remember the meal was meat and grease for supper and they killed a rooster for breakfast. When I started to leave the next morning I asked what I owed them and the Indian woman spoke up and said "75 cents."

Even though grass was waist high in those days the cattle fatten better today because of the flies. The flies ^{then} killed more stock than hard work did,