



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

Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson

This report made on (date) November 12, 1937

1. Name Mrs. E. G. Hightower

2. Post Office Address Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) North Walnut

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 24 Year 1874

5. Place of birth Arkansas

6. Name of Father C. A. Allen Place of birth Virginia

Other information about father Deceased

7. Name of Mother Mary Fields Place of birth Texas

Other information about mother Deceased

Note 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 3.

HIGHTOWER, E. G. (MRS.) INTERVIEW

#9148

Maurice R. Anderson  
Investigator  
November 12, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. E. G. Hightower,  
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

I came to the Indian Territory in 1895, and settled at Pauls Valley in the Chickasaw Nation. My husband and I went into the general mercantile business here and remained in this business until 1914. Mr. James Rennie was post-master when we came to Pauls Valley. Mr. C. J. Grant was the first banker. There was a subscription school here then, and two church houses, Presbyterian and Methodist. Dr. Burks was the leading doctor. There was a grist mill east of Pauls Valley on the river, owned by Zack Gardner and it was run by water power and was the only mill in this part of the country at that time. The old mill and Mr. Gardner's home were beautiful places to see and there was a fine shady grove there where we held picnics. Mr. Gardner's home was painted white with a white picket fence around it. At that time there were very few nice homes and Mr. Gardner's home was the finest looking house in this part of the country.

Every Sunday there would be a large crowd of people visiting there, and at apple gathering time Mr. Paul's place on the hill just south of Pauls Valley was a beautiful place. He owned the finest apple orchard in this part of the country.

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Pauls Valley was the first town in the Indian Territory to incorporate and this took place in 1898, and in January, 1899, there was opened at the little trading center of Pauls Valley the first public school for white children in the Indian Territory. Previous to this a school of a semi-public nature had been maintained, the salaries of the teachers being paid through tuition fees. This first free school had its beginning in the building already in use by the tuition school, a building purchased through popular subscription. This building, remodeled several times, is still in use as the Stufflebean Funeral home. The first public school board was, Claude Weaver, ex-postmaster of Oklahoma City, C. A. (Al) Williams, R. W. Humphrey, W. T. Hightower, J. C. Goodlie and J. B. Thompson as chairman, W. J. Sims was the first principal of the school and John Wilkinson its first superintendent. <sup>At</sup> the closing exercises of the first term of the "first free school of the Indian Territory", Miss Eugenia Tippitt received her diploma that night, the only graduate. In 1900 the graduating class again consisted of one girl, Miss Savanna Kinnebrew; in 1901 J. M. Osborn succeeded Superintendent Wilkinson and a high school building was erected on the north side of the school grounds. This first high school build-

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ing was little more than a box shanty with two rooms, one room of which served a double purpose, that of office of the superintendent and class room for the ninth and tenth grades. The seventh and eighth grades were in the other room of the shack. In 1901 the graduating class was of six girls. In 1902 there were no graduates, but in 1903 there was a class of three, among whom was Miss Beulah Conner, now the wife of the State's Attorney General, Mr. Mac Williamson. From this humble beginning in 1899 has grown the magnificent institute of which we are all so proud.

In 1908 the Washita River was higher than I have ever seen it since I have lived here. In that year people rowed up and down the streets in boats.

It was at this same time the fight was on to see who got the county seat between Elmore City, Wynnewood and Pauls Valley; that was the biggest election fight I have ever seen at Pauls Valley.

My husband, E. G. Hightower, served one term as Mayor of Pauls Valley.

I have lived in Pauls Valley continuously since 1895.