

SAUNDERS, JEFF

INTERVIEW

10448 .

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LEGEND & STORY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

298

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Field worker's name Louise S. Barnes.

This report made on (date) April 12, 1938. 1938

1. This legend was secured from (name) Jeff Saunders.

Address Watonga, Oklahoma.

This person is (m L. or ~~specific~~) white, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe \_\_\_\_\_

2. Origin and history of legend or story \_\_\_\_\_

Freighting salt from a farm.

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 3

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Louise S. Barnes;  
Investigator,  
April 12, 1938.

An Interview With Jeff Saunders,  
Watonga, Oklahoma.

I was born in Rushville, Missouri, October 11, 1861, and my wife, Clara Francis, was born on May 3, 1867, in Doniphan County, Kansas. My father, Joshiah Saunders, made the Cheyenne and Arapaho opening in 1892, and filed on a claim south and east of Watonga.

I came to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Opening in 1892 but I decided not to file a claim, because the land that I could get seemed to be all covered with timber, and I did not think I could make a living grubbing this timber off in order to make the first crop, so I returned to Kansas and then made a trip to Colorado, intending to buy a farm there. But my wife could not stand the climate so we again returned to Kansas, and in 1893 I bought a thrasher machine and came to Oklahoma to harvest the first crop in the Cheyenne country. This was one more experience.

I tried to hire help to feed the machine, this was around Carlton and finally got some Indians. They did not under-

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10448.

-2-

stand English, so I would have to show them what I wanted done. They would work very well for a while but when they grew tired they would just quit and rest whether the machine went on or not.

In 1894 I brought my family to Oklahoma with me and we moved on a Salt farm that my sister filed claim on; her name was Nancy Ellen.

We made salt on her homestead for the whole country, running a freight line to all the big ranches over the western country. I borrowed the money to buy a big team of horses, and used them on a common wagon to haul a lot of the salt. The first load I freighted I sold to a squaw man whose name was Chapman; it was a trip of forty miles and I got ten dollars for the load. It stormed so hard while I was on the road I had to unhitch the team and crawl under the wagon. I stayed there the rest of the day. I was very afraid of Indians, so I could not sleep much that night. All the west cattle ranches received the salt for \$1.00 to \$1.25 a hundred and they always paid cash for their orders, but the people of the community and the Indians received their salt for .25 cents a hundred and

-3-

they would trade groceries, wood or anything they might have, then we would trade the wood and groceries for something we might need; this way very little money was in circulation.

We made the salt in two large pans; they were about 10 x 4 feet. These were built with a furnace underneath. It took very hot fires to make forty hundred pounds in ten hours, and a poor grade of salt was made when the fire was going out. That is the reason it was not so fine, the fire was not hot enough.

I have lived on several farms since I quit making salt, and now own the home we live on west of Watonga. I will remain on the farm until I am not able to run it any longer.