

Field Worker: Maurice R. Anderson
April 10, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mr. F. M. Sanders (White)
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

BORN Arkansas
1869

PARENTS Father, Wesley Sanders
Mother, Mary Jane,
Parents deceased.

Story told by Mr. F. M. Sanders, born 1869, in
Arkansas. I came to the Indian Territory in 1887, I was eighteen
years old. I came to Talihina, in the Choctaw nation. I went to
work for Mr. Henry Gragg, who owned a saw mill. That was a rough
country then. There were lots of Choctaw Indian living around
Talihina. I got acquainted with lots of the Indian boys and have
had lots of fun going to their dances. I have seen the Choctaw
Indians hold their dances two weeks at a time. They would cook,
eat and sleep right where they held their dance. I have danced
with them lots of times. They were friendly and when white people
came to their dances the Indians would line up and the women
would line up in front of the men and that was how they danced.
I have gone to the Indians church; when you went in the door, an
Indian man would meet you and take your hat and if you did not have
on a coat he would give you one to wear until the service was over.
The men would sit on one side of the house and the women on the other
side of the house, When preaching was over, an Indian man would be
at the door and give you your hat, and take the coat if he had let
you have one.

There was lots of game to hunt for then, I have killed deer, turkey and wild hogs,

I married Miss Ora Gragg, July 3, 1894, She was the daughter of the man I went to work for when I first came to the Indian Territory. I had been working for her father about six years, when we were married. Her father owned lots of land around Talihina, so for a wedding present he told her to pick out a place where she wanted her house built, so early the next morning my wife went down the road about a quarter of a mile from where her father lived and staked off a place. I was working at the saw mill that day about nine o'clock, Mr. Gragg came to the mill and called the men off and talked to them awhile. Then he come over where I was and said, "Let's go to town". So I got in the buggy and we drove to Talihina, about five miles. We stayed all day got home about five o'clock. After we put the team up I went in the house. I asked my mother-in-law where my wife was. She said "At home, where you ought to be". Then she told me about my new house. While Mr. Gragg and I were in town the men at the mill had built me a two room house and had moved what few things my wife and I owned into it. That made me feel very proud of my father-in-law. He was more like a real father to me. My mother died when I was small and I never saw much of my father. I was reared by my mother's people until I was eighteen year old, then I left them and came to the Indian Territory.

Mr. Gragg was a fine man. I have seen him have several houses built for families who came to settle in that part of the country and did not have much money. He would have them a house

built and let them pay him as they could. There was not much farming done around Talihina. The biggest farms in cultivation ^{were} ~~was~~ about five acres, that would be in corn, beans, peas and potatoes.

I worked with my father-in-law until 1907, then I moved to Pauls Valley, and farmed for several years raising corn and cotton.

I now live in Pauls Valley, where I run a blacksmith shop.
