

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

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SAVAGE, THOS. J.

INTERVIEW.

9195.

Field Worker's name Ida A. Merwin.

This report made on (date) November 15, 1937. 1937

1. Name Thos. J. Savage. (negro)

2. Post Office Address Route #1, Orlando, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 30 Year 1876.

5. Place of birth Bloomington, Illinois.

6. Name of Father George Savage. Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information about father Slave.

7. Name of Mother Sarah Ramsey Savage. Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information about mother Slave.

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

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Ida A. Merwin,  
Investigator,  
Nov. 15, 1937.

An Interview With Thos. J. Savage,  
Route #1, Orlando, Oklahoma.

I was born at Bloomington, Illinois, January 30, 1876, my parents being George and Sarah Ramsey Savage. My parents died when I was quite young, and I was raised by my uncle, Dennis Jackson. In 1889 we came from the state of Illinois to Oklahoma Territory during the summer after the opening of old Oklahoma in April and we located in Logan County on a farm which my uncle bought. This was about one and a half miles southeast of Orlando.

The trip from Illinois was made in covered wagons. There were three families in the group. I was a lad of thirteen then and this was a great trip for me. It took us about nine weeks to make the trip. We crossed the Mississippi River on a ferry boat.

In crossing a river in Missouri we had a very narrow escape. The water was deep and swift and we missed the way the ford went and got into deeper water which caused

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the horses to swim before we could get back on the line the ford should be.

During the trip we gathered our living as we came. There were plenty of apples and sweet potatoes that year and they could be had at little cost and sometimes were given to us, while meat could be bought for three cents per pound.

On the farm that Uncle bought we built a dugout, and later a log house. I don't remember much about his crops but I know one year there was a bumper turnip crop. Some of them were quite large, and they were used in all kind of ways. During this year other crops were not very good, and this was called "turnip year".

I often caught the small wild turkeys but never succeeded in raising any of them.

At the opening of the Cherokee Strip in 1893. I was not old enough to enter the race, but as we had lived near the south line for four years I was pretty well posted on the condition of the country and I acted as a guide for others. A few years after the opening I bought rights on eighty acres, and after I married I rented an eighty on

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which there was a one-room house. We lived in this until I could build on the land I had bought. About 1903, I built a two room frame house.

Some of our furniture was home-made but we only had the necessary articles.

We used water from a spring and wood was used for fuel.

I only had what livestock was necessary for farm use; milk cows and a few hogs. I had bought a span of mules and I traded them for a team of mares, from which I raised some young horses.

My first crop was cotton and corn, but later I raised kaffir also. I hauled my cotton to Orlando and Perry. Our supplies were bought at Orlando but we did not need much in those days, as we raised vegetables and I would have corn ground at the grist mill for meal which we used for bread. I did some hunting, killing rabbits, 'possums, and coons, also some quail and prairie chicken. These we used for meat and with meat and lard that we had at butchering time we got along very well. I often took rabbits to town selling them for five cents apiece, and with this money I bought flour or other things that we needed.

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In 1891 a school house was built by donation. Some would give logs and these were sawed into lumber which was used and the work was all donated. This was located on the Kimmiman farm and was a mixed school for white and colored children. Sally Van Norsedale was the first teacher, and was paid with a county warrant. Later the location was moved on a hill and a better house was built; then it was named High Hill.