

SCOTT, SAMPSON.

INTERVIEW

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

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Field Worker's name Johnson H. Hampton.

This report made on (date) May 18, 1937. 1937

1. Name Sampson Scott.

2. Post Office Address Farris, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1877.

5. Place of birth Boswell, Oklahoma.

6. Name of Father Abner Scott. Place of birth Boswell, Okla.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Coley Scott. Place of birth Boswell, Okla.

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 5.

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Johnson H. Hampton,
Field Worker,
May 18, 1937.

An Interview With Sampson Scott,
Farris, Oklahoma.

I was born near what is known as Boswell, back in the Territory days when it was in Jackson County (it is now Choctaw County) in the year 1877. I don't know what month it was nor the day, but it was in that year.

Father's name was Abner Scott, and my mother's name was Celey Scott; they lived near Boswell and my grandfather came from Mississippi, and located at this place, where they lived until their death, my father and mother lived there until their death; there was no railroad nor town there where we lived and we used to go to Texas for our groceries; most of the Indians went to Bonham, Texas, to do their trading, and I think my father went there to do his trading.

My grandfather told my father that they had a hard time getting into this new country; they had a man with them who was sent by the Government to pilot them over here; he was a hard man and had no mercy on any of them

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and they had but very little to eat, and very little clothes on their backs and it was cold but they were driven like they were a bunch of cattle and many Indians died on this Trail of Tears and a good many of them froze to death, and there were several children who froze to death and they had to do without anything to eat for several days.. If the men had anything they would give it to the women and children and do without themselves; they had but very little clothes to put on their backs so when they pitched camp they would have to build up a big camp fire and sit up; they would let the children and women have what bed clothes they had and would sit up and build a fire to keep from freezing to death.

It took them a long while to get over here from the old country but they finally got here. After they got here they had a hard time getting themselves located and after they got located, they had to build a house and some had axes, while some of them did not have an ax with them so they had to borrow from the neighbors. They would give one another help to build houses out of logs, they would give a "working" or a "house raising" when they would all

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get together and build the houses; they had no floors because they had no lumber to floor the houses so they would not floor them, but after the dirt got hard it was just like a floor anyway; after I was grown we had that kind of flooring in our house; it was a dirt floor.

After they located the Government helped them some with a few garden seeds and corn; they fenced a small patch for their corn and garden and after the first year they got along pretty well; it was not like the old country for this country was a new country to them and it took them a long time to get used to living here. They had lots of wild game such as deer, turkeys, squirrels and plenty of fish in the creeks but they had no food stuff such as flour, meal and other things they had to have and they raised some corn. They then had meal by beating it in a mortar and they lived very well then for they could make different kinds of food out of corn. This mortar was made out of a block of wood about three feet high square at both ends; they would start a hole with an ax, then they would put coals of fire in it and they would keep this up for a week or two before the hole would get deep enough to

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clean out. It would be about six or seven inches deep; it was a round bowl when it was finished, then they would put the corn in the bowl and beat it until it was made into meal. Sometimes they would soak the corn in a kettle or a tub of some kind and let it soak for a day or two, then they would grit it and make corn bread that way. I used to see Mother go out into the woods and dig up some roots that she made bread out of, I don't know just what kind of roots she got, but after she would beat them into a fine meal it was just as good as flour bread. We did not have but very little flour bread to eat, for we could not get it and we lived principally on corn for we raised a little for bread.

My mother had a spinning wheel; she would spin cotton and make threads which she would roll into a big ball, then she would put the threads into the weaver and make cloth out of it, then she would sell it to the people, I don't know what she got for it, but I know that she sold lots of it to the people; she would make socks and mittens and sell them to the people; she did not get any money for

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them but she would get what she needed to eat; very little money she got for selling them, she used to go out into the woods and get some kind of weeds, barks and gather up bois d' arc chips and use them for dyeing the cloth she made; it was just as good dye as you would buy out of the store them days.

I saw several Indian ball games when I was growing up but I never did play any of the games; it looked pretty tough for they would fight before the ball was in play, and fight all during the game; they used the ball sticks in their fight; they would turn the stick around and use the other end of it to fight with and some of them had the handle part loaded with lead; it looked too tough for me to get into the game. I went to school just for a little while; I did not learn much so I am not able to speak any English, nor read or write it but I can read and write in my own language pretty well.

(Note: Sampson has been using Indian expressions in his interviews in typical Indian manner. No change is made in his wording. Ed)

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Story as given by WALTER SCOTT To Breland Adams, Field Worker

2/23/37

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born

I was/August 14, 1870 at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory.

My mother was Margaret Coody, daughter of Dan Coody. She
born close to Ft. Gibson in 1851 and died at the age of 20
and five months, when I was fourteen months old. My mother
of Cherokee Indian blood.

My father was John Stringer Scott, a white man from Ohio.
and my uncle were in the Union Army and fought all the way to
Pie Grove, Arkansas, where my father was captured by the Con-
federates and taken to Ft. Smith, Arkansas. Later he was traded
to the Union Army in/exchange for Confederate soldiers which
the Union Army had captured. Father was mustered out of the Army
at Ft. Gibson, where he married my mother. I am kin to the Ross
family through my grandmother on my mother's side, however I do
not know much about my mother's people. (His grandfather, I think,
lived on the old Holland place about 9 miles east of Ft. Gibson.
This place was originally the Coody's place, however, when I asked
my father about this, he said that he did not know where his grand-
father was buried.)

I went to the public schools of Ft. Gibson and later went to
Bacon College two terms. Bacon was an exceptionally good school.
I learned more there in two terms than all the other time I went to
school. Our teachers were very good. After I had gone to school
two terms, I quit school and went to buying calves. I was about
18 years old at that time. When I went to school in Ft. Gibson
often some of us children would play hockey and stay around the
blacksmith shop. John Bean a negro blacksmith working in the shop
always help us hide if anyone came around looking for us.

Mr Scott

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My father John Scott went into the general mercantile business with Gibson after the Civil War and continued in that business until his death 1895, about Christmas time. My brother Gibson Scott, older than myself, worked in the store. I did not have much to do in the store. Sometimes I clerked a little but mostly I would go out and collect stock in payment for accounts which my father had on his people. In this manner we handled lots of cattle. We would buy calves for about \$5.00 each and keep them a year and sell them for \$10.00 each. We usually doubled our money. We just branded the calves and turned them loose until roundup time the next year. In those days everyone had what they called a hog claim. They would turn a sow loose and that entitled them to the claims. Several times I have taken two negroes and a wagon and gone to the Grand river to hunt wild hogs. I would leave one negro on the bank of the river to build a fire and the other negro and team and look for wild hogs. I would shoot 5 hogs, load them in the wagon and go back to the river where we would dress them. We had plenty of fresh pork and would salt it so that we did not use immediately. I remember that we had very good fairs. There were livestock and farm products exhibits. Mr. Ross has pictures of this fair. His father was one of the judges of the fair.

The principal stores at Ft. Gibson when I was a young fellow, were my father's and Percival's. Goods were sold on your honor. Usually \$50.00 was the limit of credit. There were no notes or checks. Everybody had two or more cows and debts were generally paid with calves, wood, hay, or something of that sort.

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The Government used 600 cords of wood a year at the Port. would give the contract to the lowest bidder. Some merchant and always got the contract and sub-contract with the people and the country. I remember one old negro, Daniel Van (we called Uncle Dan) who generally contracted for 50 cords of wood each year. He would contract to deliver the wood so cheap that it got to be kind of a joke around Mt. Gibson. Someone would ask Dan what he thought of sellin' the wood so cheap and he would say, "Well, I see the contract ain't sh." He thought so much of the contract that he did not care about making anything.

Hay was contracted in the same manner as wood. I do not remember how much the Government used but it was quite a bit. There were no hay balers then. Hay was stacked in long ricks and then was left to settle 30 days then the ricks were retopped and measure. Settling the hay would have ^{low} ~~low~~ pieces on top and water would run in. It was retopped so as to shed water.

I did very little hunting when I was a boy. Sometimes I would go out and hunt squirrels but that is about all. There were plenty of other game but I did not care much to hunt. I did not like to fish either, even in the best times when fish was plentiful, they just ain't bite my hook.

I remember one time when there was a payment, called broad money, of \$10.60 and bought a heifer from my father for \$9.00. I raised fifty head of stock from that start. At another payment there was an uprising by the negroes. It was caused by the negroes not paying their debts. Coon Van started the uprising. Coon is still living. He was quite a bad character when he was young but he got better and now he is a good old man.

ter Scott

Almost every night when I was young there would be forty or fifty shots heard during the night; however, people were used to it and paid no attention. There were lots of bad characters and also soldiers were a tough bunch, generally speaking. They got paid a month and gamblers would come ^{to} Ft. Gibson from all over the country to "make" the pay day. Nearly always there were some killers from Albuquerque, N.M. which was a great gambling resort at that time. There was always a killing or two on pay day. Sometimes the soldiers and sometimes the gamblers were killed. I remember one time that I went over to see the body of a gambler that had been killed. Tom French's wife (who was afterwards my wife) had a boarding house and a young fellow came to town that was a gambler. He would sleep all day and gamble all night. He would always give Mrs. French his money belt to keep for him, that was the manner in which most people carried their money. (Mrs. French thought he was a very nice young man. He had been to Ft. Gibson several times.) After the gambler had been in town a few days, Texas rangers got off the mail hack one morning. They inquired around town and decided that the young gambler in the French boarding house was the one that they wanted. He was asleep upstairs and the rangers had all the people get out of the hotel, they said that the gambler was a bad character and there would probably be something. They went up to his room and surprised him. They brought him downstairs in handcuffs. He asked Mrs. French for his money belt and told her that she would not see him again. The soldiers stayed in Ft. Gibson until about 1869.

I remember the Jeff Davis home or so it was called. It was a two-story log house with a long wing and a cellar, fine furniture, etc. If I could only have known and bought this place

er Scott

ould have had it sawed it up in small pieces and sold it for
 onire. People come here from all over the South and ¹⁷² could pay
 g price to have a small piece out of the old Jeff Davis home.
 building referred to by Mr. Scott was probably where Jeff Davis
 ed while in Ft. Gibson. It is shown on the old plot of the
 ands as the surgeon's quarters.)

I was married in 1896 to Nanny Satliff McCracken, a former
 of Tom French and also of Cook McCracken. He died several
 s back.

Rube Evans widow might be able to give you some information.
 was a sister of Dave Indree and lives in Muskogee now. My
 her Gibson Scott lives at the YIC in Muskogee and works at
 Indian Agency. He might be able to give you some information.