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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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SETTLES, RUBEN WASHINGTON

INTERVIEW

8060

Field Worker's name Ethel PalmerThis report made on (date) July 22 1937

1. Name Ruben Washington Settles
2. Post Office Address Putnam, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) Rural Route,
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 26 Year 1870
5. Place of birth Denton County, Texas
6. Name of Father Ruben Washington Place of birth Texas  
Other information about father In Civil War 3 years 6 months
7. Name of Mother Delilah Kisor Place of birth Texas  
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 4.

Ethel Palmer,  
Interviewer,  
July 22, 1937.

An Interview with Ruben Washington Sellers,  
Putnam, Oklahoma.

I came to the Chickasaw Nation in 1887 when I was seventeen years old, coming from Cooke County, Texas, in a covered wagon. We were three days making the trip.

We lived in a log house which I built myself, with a fireplace and a stone chimney, which was "swell" for those days, as we were used to houses made from sod. We cooked in the fireplace, that is, when we had anything to cook. We lived sometimes on molasses and corn bread, (and yellow jackets). We would start to eat and those yellow jackets would fall into our plates of molasses.

We lived on land which we leased from an Indian named George Bolder; it was called a running lease; one year we would break out an acre and lease it for five years more and the next year we would break another acre and lease it for five more years.

This country was very thinly settled with a family about every six miles. We had to go about twenty miles to our closest railroad, on the Red River. There were no churches nor schools when I first came, but of course we had them later.

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We raised good gardens, but the women folks did not know anything about canning any of the garden stuff. Corn and cotton were our main crops, as all we had to farm with were double shovels and Georgia stocks.

We would get from 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ¢ to 8¢ a pound for our cotton and 25¢ a bushel for our corn.

There was a railroad at Durant which was about sixty miles away.

Father died and left my mother with eight children younger than I. After Father's death we moved down by Mannsville.

I was a teamster for the Militia. This trouble occurred when the Five Civilized Tribes set in to put the intruders out of Oklahoma. They called the people who would not pay permits, intruders. They would send a band of Indians in one direction and another band in another direction. The permit was \$5.00 and if people could not pay the Indians would load them up and take them over the line into the adjoining states, Kansas or Texas. They moved more than a hundred and fifty families before the adjoining states put a stop to it.

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I was a teamster for three months and twenty days. I carried water, wood and cooking supplies and I helped cook some.

When an Indian would get seriously sick they would give a big Indian dance and build a fire out quite a distance from the door, then start their dance between the house and the bonfire, and would dance and sing until the patient would either die or get well.

The Santa Fe Railroad was built through Ardmore in 1889. A gristmill, a water mill, and a gin, turned by an ox, were built in Ardmore. This gin, worked by oxen, would gin from four to six bales of cotton a day.

The first binder which I remember would dump the wheat and we would follow and tie the bundles with wire by hand.

My grandfather and his son and five hired boys were out in the field working one day when a crowd of Indians came upon them. Grandfather and uncle escaped and hid, and they saw the Indians scalp the five men, and kill the seven horses and take the saddles. My uncle walked several miles with an arrow in his foot. This happened near Spanish Fort.

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Some Indians stole two girls and tied them onto two horses and drove these horses, to which the girls were tied, away with a herd of horses and the relatives of these girls had to pay the Indians \$2,000.00 to release them.