



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

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LOVETT, JOHN J.

INTERVIEW.

6986.

Field Worker's name Wylie Thornton.

This report made on (date) July 25, 1937. 1937

1. Name John J. Lovett.

2. Post Office Address rahlequah, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) General Delivery.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 4 Year 1878.

5. Place of birth Garfield Indian Territory.

6. Name of Father William Lovett. Place of birth Garfield County.  
Indian Territory.

Other information about father Died near his old home town.

7. Name of Mother Nannie Pettit. Place of birth Garfield  
County.

Other information about mother Garfield County, Indian Terr.

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 6.

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Wylie Thornton,  
Field Worker,  
July 25, 1937.

An Interview With John Lovett,  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

I was born near Gabriel, Indian Territory, on March 4th, 1878, and lived there until the last two or three years. I was raised by E. L. Cookson right out there in the Cookson hills and I suppose those mountains were named after Mr. Cookson's people.

My father died when I was about six or seven years of age and I lost my mother when I was nine or ten years old. Mr. Cookson had been a real father to me; he gave me all the education you could expect an Indian boy to get away back there; any way Mr. Cookson gave me enough education to keep me from going bad like most of the boys did who were brought up under the old environment in those wild hills. I saw plenty of those boys "go bad".

The names of a few I knew that did go bad: Fred Walker, Ed Lockhart, Mose Miller, John Miller, Jim Miller, Henry Starr, and Tom French, and a lot of others.

I knew about how they operated and I knew the places where they received aid and were given their meals. I will

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mention one place where Fred Walker and Ed Lockhart hid when they saw that they would have to hide or get caught.

Not too near to Standing Rock there is a hole in the ground right out in the open, and only a few sumach bushes grow there around the mouth of this very strange hole in the earth. Once when the officers were really gone, Fred Walker came out of this hole and he had forgotten his coat in there and we had to go back in this cave and get it.

#### SCHOOLS.

I attended my first school at White Oak. This was a full blood Indian school operated by the Indian Department and that first school that I remember was taught by a white man but his wife was an Indian and his name was Ewers and he had two boys of his own named Emmett and John, and one day a very dangerous snake bit one of these boys on the knee and I helped pull it off of him.

An Indian doctor cured that boy; this Indian doctor's name was Lewis and he was a full blood. Dr. Lewis used some kind of roots on this bite and this boy suffered very little from the result.

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I attended the White Oak school for four or five years; it was located right where Qualls is now located. Qualls is the new name for this location and then after that I attended the Garfield school. Mr. W. F. Rosmond was the teacher of the Garfield school. He was a white man but his wife was an Indian; she was a relative of Dick Downingburg.

No whites were allowed to attend those Indian schools at that time, and the principal subjects taught were spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic, no English. Later, I attended the Cherokee National Male Seminary here in Tahlequah. I graduated in the class of 1900. There were only four in the class. William R. Harris, Dewitt Clayton Lipe, and James M. Crutchfield and I.

Mr. Robert Garrett was our superintendent at that time. I taught school during 1927 and '28 under County Superintendent Bill Whormley of Cherokee County. I taught the Sellar's School in District Number 79, and I was appointed county clerk for the unexpired term of Arch Spears at his death in the year 1914. The rest of my life I have seen stock all over the mountainous country to the south of us. I know every fox

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hole and every bluff and hide-out of the Cookson Hills.

In 1930 I had in the Cookson Hills two hundred and forty white-faced cattle, mostly cows, nineteen mules, three cow ponies for round-ups and four mares but I lost my profit when the crash came.

I had two hundred acres in cultivation on my wife's place, together with my own. All together we owned and controlled over five hundred acres of that mountain land.

#### MEDICINE.

I contracted a very acute case of dropsy when I was about twelve years of age. It developed so fast that I was seriously sick before I realized it.

The white doctor was called from town and he got out there just in time to tap me and prevent the water from flooding my heart. I remember that my arms stood out from my body I was so swollen; this tapping was kept up every few days and finally the Indian Herb man was called after the local physicians and some medical company in Atlanta, Georgia, had been consulted. The Indian doctor asked me to have faith in him and to do his bidding without doubting. I was ready to try anything and he took me with him one

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early morning. We started out through the woods and finally reached a hollow stump with rain-water in it and with many wiggle tails in the water. This Indian doctor had told me to lean over this stump and used his hand to bathe my head with this water. He gave my hair a good soaking, then hunted up some grape vines, gathered a bundle of them and burned them on a fire. Then he used the ashes of those grape vines and put a small amount in a glass of water which I drank and in ten days I was well. At that time people were beginning to plow up gardens for early planting, so I was beginning to feel "tops" so as I had to do something, I pitched in a crop with my foster father and we made a big crop of corn that year and I have never felt a single symptom of that disease since. That good Indian Herb doctor is dead now.

## CHURCHES.

We had a few Indian preachers and their names were: Soldier Tollen, Johnson Spade and Charley Rodder. Of all the Indian preachers I ever heard Johnson Spade made the greatest impression on me and I shall never forget how

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solemn he would look when he would lead his converts out into the water to baptize them.

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#### ROADS.

we did not have any permanent roads but always carried a good ax ready to cut out a new road.

#### COURT.

We had District Courts, and these courts had jurisdiction in this district. ~~This district was about like a County Court is now, and had limited authority about like a County Court now.~~ Then we had a Circuit Court and the judges of the Circuit Court circulated through many of these lower courts and operated in a manner similar to ~~our District Courts now.~~ These higher courts had authority to hang a man or to sentence him for any major crime.

Tom Ballard was our District Judge and Judge Lon Lynch was our first Circuit Judge.

#### FAMILY.

I was married to Maggie Loretta Cookson, daughter of Andrew G. Cookson, and we have had born to us six children, four boys and two girls. All living, and in school here.