

STANLAND, JOHN J.

INTERVIEW

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STANDARD FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Liaison History Project for Oklahoma #10439

STANLAND, JOHN O. INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt

This report made on (date) April 11, 1938

1. Name Mr. John O. Stanland

2. Post Office Address Lugert, Oklahoma. Kiowa County.

3. Residence address (or location) Farm.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 11 Year 1859

5. Place of birth Georgia.

6. Name of Father Thomas Stanland Place of birth Georgia.

Other information about father Confederate Soldier.

7. Name of Mother Annie Focen Stanland Place of birth Florida.

Other information about mother Member of a Pioneer family of

Florida.

Inter 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 sheet if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached \_\_\_\_\_.

An Interview with Mr. John O. Stanland , Lugert, Oklahoma  
By - Ethel B. Tackitt, Investigator.  
April 11, 1938.

I was born in Georgia, March 11, 1859. My father was a native of Georgia and served as a Confederate soldier throughout the Civil War. My mother, Annie Focen Stanland, was a native of Florida and a member of a pioneer family of that state. I moved with my parents and family from Georgia to Texas in 1867 where I grew up and lived until moving to the Indian Territory.

I married and with my own family moved to the Chickasaw Indian Nation and leased land near the present town of Duncan in Stephens County in 1895. After farming in the Chickasaw Territory two years, I decided to go up into the Cheyenne and Arapaho Country which had been opened for settlement in 1892 and file on a claim, thereby securing for myself and family a home of our own.

We drove through the Kiowa-Comanche and Apache Indian Nation in our covered wagon with the few household goods which we had brought from Texas. There were no roads through this district at that time except wagon tracks going in the general direction in which we wanted to go from one cow camp

to another or trails from one Indian encampment to another. The grass everywhere brushed the breastyoke and wagon tongue as we bumped along across the prairies, creeks and gullies. There were no fences or farms as this Indian Territory had not yet been opened for white settlers. The country was full of cattle, however, as many big cattle companies were still running their stock in the unopened territories. We found a claim on which I could file, located one-half mile south of the present town of Sentinel in Washita County not far from the Kiowa-Comanche Territory line. This Kiowa-Comanche Territory line was then marked by a four wire, barbed wire fence and was called the Quarantine Line. This quarantine was against the Texas cattle, which brought ticks and caused the Northern cattle to have Texas fever.

I filed on my claim on one hundred and sixty acres and began to try to improve it. The first thing was to make some kind of shelter in which we could live. So, like everybody else, I dug a dugout in the side of the bank, building it up with logs out from Elk Creek which had fine timber on it at that time. There was not one single piece of plank nor one bought thing about our dugout when it was

finished. We were proud of it and moved into our home where we lived two years before I could afford to buy lumber for the two roomed box house which we built on the claim.

All our supplies had to be hauled by wagon from El Reno and with roads such as I have described, to say nothing of having to cross the Washita and Canadian Rivers and Cobb Creek and many others through which much more water flowed than at the present time. This was very difficult; there was no plowed land to stop the drainage, or to prevent the water from standing in lakes and branches during wet weather, thereby rendering wagon travel almost impossible in rainy weather.

I broke out some sod and planted cotton and corn. I suppose it must have been because the soil was more fertile then than it is now, but I never saw better corn grown than I raised and my cotton produced wonderfully well. Our gardens grew without any effort so we soon had plenty to eat - but marketing the corn and cotton was the problem.

The next fall I started to haul a load of cotton

and all the eggs we could save to Duncan in Stephens County to market, expecting to buy supplies with the proceeds. I came across the valley in which Lone Wolf and Robert<sup>son</sup> in Kiowa County are now located, but then there was nothing there but grass and cattle. Of course travel was slow and it required days to make the trip and a snow storm came up and by the time I reached the Kiowa Chief, Lone Wolf's grove on East Elk Creek just above the mouth, the weather had become very cold. I camped at this grove over night as I had my own cooking and camp outfit, but all that night some kind of varmint prowled around my wagon. I supposed it was a panther for they were common so I did not get up to investigate but the next morning my mules had run away and everything was covered with snow so deep that it was impossible to follow the wagon tracks which was all the road amounted to. I went out to hunt my team and after several hours I found them and brought them back. I was almost frozen for the weather was very cold. Chief Lone Wolf had discovered my camp and he came to my wagon when I returned, telling me in broken English that I must come up to his house and get warm. I was most thankful to him and went with him.

The Government at that time was building houses for the Kiowa Indians and endeavouring to bring them to an understanding of civilized living. Chief Lone Wolf was among the few who seemed to appreciate the comforts of civilized life. He had a good house with plenty of furniture in it and it was warm and comfortable. Just he and his wife were living there and they made me very welcome. Chief Lone Wolf spoke English only brokenly then but in later years he learned to talk quite well. He was a very intelligent man and one felt when talking to him that he was a good man and was doing his best to lead his people in the right way. His wife could not speak English at all and though they had plenty of chairs, she sat upon the floor and wore her blanket. I was forced to stay at Lone Wolf's grove until the snow melted off so that I could follow the wagon tracks and I continued my hard journey and found to my dismay that when I reached Duncan, all the eggs had frozen and bursted. For the cotton I received 4 cents per pound. I made the trip back home without any trouble but such trips did not pay expenses and I, as well as my neighbors used our fine

ear corn for fuel in the winter, as we could only get 18 cents per bushel after hauling it to such distant market as ~~Duncan~~.

The present town of Sentinel had only one store then and it was owned by a Pennsylvania Dutchman named Whitner and Sentinel was called Barton then. I had a friend and neighbor who owned a blacksmith shop in Barton; his name was Anderson and when the Kiowa country opened in 1901 he got a claim just across the line in Kiowa County on the south side of Elk Creek and moved his family to hold down the claim but he continued to operate his blacksmithy in Barton.

At that time the Elk Creek bottom would be over flowed in time of rain even worse than it is at present and once there came an awful rain so Anderson became uneasy about his family and started home; when he reached Elk Creek he found it at flood stage and he was determined to go home, so he took off all his clothing that he might be able to swim with more ease and not become entangled in the drift wood. He made the crossing all right but emerged on the other side perfectly naked

and made a dash for his home and when he reached there he ran into the dugout and began calling to his wife to bring him some clothes. She, having no knowledge of his coming home, heard the call but was too badly frightened to understand it and rushed out of the little house and to the home of a neighbor, frantically telling them that some kind of varmint had gone into her dugout, so the neighbor armed himself and all the family went home with her to find Anderson shivering and calling for his wife to bring him some clothes. This is a lasting pioneer joke.

One winter before the opening of the Kiowa country a terrific blizzard came and the cattle on the Connel Ranch which was near Barton drifted against the fences and froze to death by the hundreds and their owners hired people to skin them, then the hides were shipped and sold. My neighbor, John Black, made a lot of money by skinning stock; he owned a pair of big mules, the best pulling team I ever saw. He would skin the hide back off the animal's head, then hitch these mules to the hide by singletrees, then with a knife he would split the skin completely down the under side of the body and, dragging

it backward with the team, would quickly strip the skin from the carcass.

A loan company came into our community with an offer of a five year loan to improve our claims. John Black got a loan and built a house and wanted me to take a loan also and I made application but when I found that I could not pay off the mortgage under five years without paying the whole five years interest, I would not accept it for I feared that I might not have the money when the note came due in five years. John Black could not pay off his mortgage and lost his claim. I lived on my claim and proved up, never placing a mortgage on it. After the Kiowa Country opened up for white settlers I sold my Washita claim and with the proceeds purchased the claim on which I now live near Lugart.