

STAPLES, BEN INTERVIEW.

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

Field Worker's name _____ on _____

This report made on (date) _____ 1937

1. Name _____

2. Post Office Address _____

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1887

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ (Lynn) _____ Place of birth _____

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 _____

AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. BEN STAPLES
Pittsburg, 3 miles south.

By
Charline M. Culbertson, Field Worker

"EARLY DAY IN TERRITORY"

Mr. Staples moved to Indian Territory in 1869 with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. am. Brazelton Staples, coming from Arkansas. They located near esley on what was called the Ft. Smith and Stringtown road. They came in a wagon, driven by a mule team and had no other stock. They leased land from John Pen Rogers who was a white man; however, Mr. Staples states there were very few white people here. Their closest neighbors were t Colbert Station and Stringtown which was eight miles away. Their very closest friend was a full-blood Choctaw Indian by the name of Nola Tubbee. There were no railroads at this time and it was necessary for them to go to Ft. Smith, Arkansas, for supplies. They would go by wagon which would take a week, and this trip was made only once or twice a year.

There were lots of wild game at that time. Mr. Staples states there were more wild turkeys then than there are tame ones now.

It was near Boggy and Red river where they held their district court. Anyone could attend. Their pun-

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ishment to a prisoner was to whip him with hickory sprouts which he states would hurt very badly as they would have them take their shirts off and whip them on the bare skin on the back. The Sheriff and his deputies would do the whipping. Any one could watch the whipping being done. They had no jails and Mr. Staple states they would not run away.

Their base ball games were very rough and often some one would be killed in the game. The bat was made of hickory about one yard long.

There were no noted trails through Wesley. The schools were subscription schools, the parents being required to pay so much for their child to go to school.

They would have to travel to Stringtown or Atoka for a doctor. Dr. Haynes of Atoka was remembered as one of the best doctors of that day. The white people always had the professional doctors. The Indians would have their own doctor and the medicine was made of herbs.

Mr. Staples was of no Indian blood but he holds the Indians as his very dear and most honest friends. He states a yearling wandered to the home of an Indian friend of his by the name of John Rogers, and its offspring had increased to six or eight head, still the

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Indian would not dispose of the cattle and they were later returned to the owner. They could leave an axe in the woods where they had been chopping wood or any other equipment, and it would never be moved.

Berton Doyle was the first postmaster at Rogers Station, near what is now Wesley. The mail was carried in stages, later by horse back and then was taken in two-wheel carts, which were termed Buck Boards.

They had to go to Boggy depot to get corn ground. This was done about twice a year. They would buy large lots of goods and make the clothes they had.

Mr. Staple states in his opinion the winters were much colder than they are now. Drouths were not noticed at that time. They had very few crops, only things they could eat.

Stock would run loose, then every spring they would round them up and every one would bring home the stock that had strayed away. They would be branded.