

STEWART, WILLIAM R.

INTERVIEW

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

1377

STEWART, WILLIAM R.

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Field Worker's name Maud M. Fink,This report made on (date) July 13, 1937

1. Name William R. Stewart,
2. Post Office Address, Clinton, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) 408 Dunn
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 2 Year 1867
5. Place of birth Louisa, Kentucky.

6. Name of Father LaFalleta Stewart Place of birth Louisa, Kentuck
Other information about father Doctor
7. Name of Mother Emmie Gillum Place of birth Virginia
Other information about mother School teacher.

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.

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8056

138

Maud M. Fink,
Interviewer,
July 13, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. William R. Stewart,
408 Dunn,
Clinton, Oklahoma.

Mr. Stewart was here before Clinton was built; he saw Clinton when it was Rag Town in 1902. He came to this country in 1899. The first railroad was the Santa Fe-Gulf, which started at Choctaw and ran by Weatherford.

Weatherford was named for a man named Bill Weatherford. Harry Trust was the first United States Marshal in Weatherford.

There was a Frisco railroad built in the winter of 1899 which went by way of Rocky before the opening of Kiowa and Comanche Counties.

William R. Stewart came from Missouri to Oklahoma. He came on the train to Weatherford; he shipped his things to Weatherford and brought them out here in a wagon. He settled in Washita County where he was a farmer and handled a few head of stock.

He could plant corn on top of a hill and it would make good corn. They raised cotton, wheat, barley

and some ryé. They would plant watermelons along the fence rows and raise them by the wagon loads.

The people walked and did their plowing and cultivating. Mr. Stewart used a sulky plow for three or four years after he came to this country.

The people lived in dugouts and half dugouts. The dugouts had only one room, but the half dugouts sometimes were built in an L shape with three or more rooms.

The people had to haul their things down to Sugden. It would take several days to make the trip as there were no bridges and they had to ford all the rivers and creeks. There was a toll bridge at bridgeport over the Canadian River, but the people would not pay to cross, they would drive into the river. There was no bridge on the Washita River and the banks were high and steep, but the people would find a place to cross where the banks were not so steep.

They usually forded the Washita River at Big Jake crossing. Where this crossing got its name was from a man called Big Jake who owned the allotment where the crossing was.

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8056

140

-3-

There were no section lines and the roads just cut across the country. They followed the main trail which was mostly built by the Indians. If they wanted to go one way and the timber was too thick they would have their chopping axes with them, and would clear the way.

Arapaho was the county seat of Custer County, Cloud Chief of Washita County, Cheyenne of Roger Mills County, and Sayre of Beckham County. These towns had been set aside by the Government for county seats. Elk City had not been built at that time.

The people had about the same to do at then as they do today. They raised their own gardens. They had to go a long way to a mill. The first mill put up was at Weatherford, and it was a little grist mill. People got their every day clothes at the county seats but when they wanted better clothes they bought them at El Reno.

~~The Antelope Hills were named because there were so many antelope around them.~~

School was held in a one-room building, with

one teacher who taught all grades. The grades were not divided then as they are now. The children just went to school. No teacher could teach as high as the Eighth Grade. The first school at Clinton was in a dugout, and the benches for seats were made out of lumber.

The first school at Port was where the road turns north at Port. The school house was on Mr. Barney's place.

There were no services held in the summer time; they built an arbor by the dugout school house, and held revivals. They would set up planks, two by fours, and put hog wire over this and put hay on top of it for shade.

When people first came to this country they would stake hogs out just as people stake their cows out today. There were no lots built for them.

For entertainment people would give dances. For those that did not dance, a bunch would get together and pass the evening in visiting. The people would travel by horse and buggy or on horseback.

Mr. Stewart's father practiced medicine until four years ago when he came to Oklahoma.