

TARWATER, M. H.

INTERVIEW

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

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TARWATER, E. H.

INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Maurice R. AndersonThis report made on (date) June 17, 19371. Name Mr. E. H. Tarwater2. Post Office Address Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.3. Residence address (or location) West Joy Avenue.4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 18695. Place of birth Texas6. Name of Father John S. Tarwater Place of birth KentuckyOther information about father Deceased7. Name of Mother Martha Place of birth TennesseeOther information about mother Deceased

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

An Interview with Mr. E. H. Tarwater, Pauls Valley.

By - Maurice R. Anderson, Field Worker.

June 17, 1937.

I was born in 1869 in Texas.

In 1899 I moved from Arkansas to the Indian Territory and located at old Ada. I leased a small farm and went to farming. I lived in a log house with a dirt floor. I did shoe work in my spare time and at nights. My father had taught me how to fix shoes back in Arkansas. We used to put half soles on shoes with wooden pegs and do our sewing by hand. I tried to farm and do shoe work on the side.

After I got acquainted with several people I had to quit farming and do shoe repair work altogether. I heard that a railroad was going to be built through that part of the country, so in my spare time, and on Sundays, I would cut and make ties. I knew if the railroad was to be built I would be able to sell the cross ties, and if it was not to be built I would use them for wood.

One evening, in 1900, I came home from a day's hard work making ties and my wife said, "There are lots of

people gathered about a half mile from our house". I ate supper and walked down there and right in the middle of a large cotton patch there was a tent and two men were selling town lots. I could have bought a lot for almost nothing but I didn't want any lots. I couldn't see how two towns as close together as old Ada and this new town were, would ever amount to anything so I went back to making cross ties.

In a few days some of the stores at old Ada were moved to the new townsite, but I had a good trade where I was. My shop was in one room where I lived and I had a good business and was making a good living for my family so I was satisfied. In a short time someone put in a shoe repair shop at the new townsite and my business began to fail and the next thing we knew the post office at old Ada was moved to the new site one night and this tore up old Ada.

I had good luck in selling my cross ties and I also went to work for the railroad company, so I quit repairing shoes, except for a few shoes that some of my old neighbors would bring in to be fixed.

Word got out that "Old Snake", a Creek Indian, and his band were going to wreck a bridge on the railroad. "Old Snake" as he was called, used to be a chief at one time. I was put on guard at this bridge and for three days and nights I watched the bridge, but old Snake never showed up. The first night I was on guard several Indians came to the bridge but they did not try to do any damage. I told one of them who could speak English that my orders were to shoot anyone trying to do any damage to the bridge. They talked among themselves a while and left. I was given the rifle which I used in guarding the bridge; the man told me it was full of shells so I did not examine it until I was called in and told that the danger was over, but before turning the gun in I thought that I would unload it, so I worked the lever, and to my surprise there wasn't a shell in the gun. I had been guarding a bridge for three days and nights without any ammunition.

I was living near Ada when a mob took three men out and hung them in an old shack. I remember the names

of two of the men were Miller and Allen. They had killed Guss Bobett and from what I could find out about it some one had "had it in" for Guss Bobett and had given the three men \$500.00 to kill him. A mob went to the jail and tied up the sheriff and put ropes around the necks of these three men and led them to an old shack and hung them. I have heard men say that if you had it in for anyone and wanted him to be killed all it would cost was about \$100.00.

I have heard Jeff Reed say that he used to carry the mail from old Ada to old Center on foot. Mr. Reed established the post office at old Ada in 1890.

I now live in Pauls Valley where I own a shoe repair shop.