

TAYLOR, JOSEPH

INTERVIEW #8961

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BIOGRAPHY WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker's name Mildred B. McFarland

This report made on (date) October 19, 1937

1. Name Mr. Joseph Taylor (Negro)

2. Post Office Address Luther, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Box 22

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 10 Year 1856

5. Place of birth Irvington, Georgia

6. Name of Father Anthony Taylor Place of birth Georgia

Other information about father was slave in Georgia

7. Name of Mother Mary Taylor Place of birth N. Carolina

Other information about mother slave, sold on block for

two hundred dollars.

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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Interview with Joseph Taylor,
Luther, Oklahoma.

My mother and father were slaves on a large plantation in Georgia, owned by Mr. Charles Hooks.

He bought my mother on the auction block for two hundred dollars just a short time before I was born. As I grew older I was trained as a house boy. I was nine years old at the close of the Civil War.

When we obtained our freedom we went to Mississippi. We lived on a small farm there for fourteen years. I married a little playmate of several years standing and we moved to Oklahoma.

We homesteaded one hundred and sixty acres in the Iowa Indian Reservation. I built a small log cabin and chinked the cracks with mud. There was just a dirt floor. I built a fireplace across one end and we did our cooking in this. We hung a kettle on long hooks. Our frying pan had three

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legs. We placed this in a bed of hot coals. My bed was made of peeled poles and I took rope and wove it back and forth to make the springs. We then made a mattress of corn husks and dried grass. We had a nice large spring on the place and it is still being used.

I carried what few supplies I could get on my back in a tow sack from Guthrie, twenty-five miles away. We lived on squirrel and rabbits most of the time. ~~Yorn bread and cornmeal~~ mush consisted of our only food for several months.

The place was infested with rattlesnakes. I have killed many of them on my doorsill.

I was not able to buy a plow or horse the first year. I had to cultivate about three acres with the grubbing hoe. I have worked all night to get my land planted. I raised cotton on that three acres and made enough to buy a mule and a plow blade.

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I cut a tree down and fashioned it into a plow stock.

After I got the mule I made a pack saddle to carry supplies. I would ride him to Guthrie, strap my food on the pack and lead the mule home.

The first school house was about one mile from our home. It was merely a hole in the ground, called a dugout. We held church services there, too, in the winter. In the summer time we built a brush arbor.

The second year I was able to buy a hog and some chickens. When I marketed the third crop I bought a cow.

The Sac and Fox Reservation was not far from us but they never caused us any trouble.

The land was not so good where we lived and several years after I had proved up on my claim, I sold it and bought one hundred and sixty acres,

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two miles west and one and one-half miles north of Luther. There was a log house already on the place. I built a barn and chicken house. I bought from Mr. Chilocothe, the owner. It took quite awhile to get started again. I cut wood to sell the first winter, also trapped rabbits and sold them.

I now live in Luther and rent my farm.