

TEETERS, H. H.

INTERVIEW

9764

386

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

Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson

This report made on (date) January 18, 1938 1938

1. Name Mr. H. H. Teeters
2. Post Office Address Wynnewood, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) 2 miles southwest
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 5 Year 1873
5. Place of birth Cherokee Nation, near Vinita, Oklahoma

6. Name of Father Press Teeter Place of birth Missouri

7. Name of Mother Mary Radlin Place of birth Missouri

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 4

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Maurice R. Anderson  
Investigator  
January 18, 1938.

Interview with H. H. Teeters  
Wynnewood, Oklahoma.

I was born in the Cherokee Nation near Vinita in 1873. My father and mother came from Missouri right after the Civil War and settled on Spavinaw Creek near Vinita and my father established the first sawmill in that part of the country; the mill was operated by water power and sawed lumber for people settling in that part of the country to build homes. I have heard my grandfather say that my father cut out lumber to build a small church house and this lumber was given to the community where he lived and he also made benches and gave them to the community; this building also served as a schoolhouse. This is where I attended my first school; it was called the Lindsay school. The first year I went to school was in 1878 and there were only three months of school.

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My father and mother died while/was quite small and my grandfather took over the sawmill and operated it for a few years.

In 1880 my grandfather moved back to Missouri and I lived with him until he died in the winter of 1885. At his death he left me a fine black horse and his saddle. After

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grandfather's death I went to live with my aunt; it wasn't like living with my grandfather; I had to work from sunup until sometimes after dark getting the work done and hard as I tried I couldn't get along with that family. So, one night in the early spring of 1886, I saddled my horse that grandfather had given to me and left for the Indian Territory. My uncle, T. J. Thompson, was living northeast of Pauls Valley on what was called then Peavine Creek. I did not have a dime in money when I left my aunt's home. After about two weeks riding and eating what I could get, I finally reached Pauls Valley where I was able to find out where my uncle lived.

The railroad at that time was building through Pauls Valley. While coming through to Pauls Valley, I thought several times I was going to freeze to death. One time I recall after I had crossed the Canadian River, (I didn't know it was the Canadian River then but later I told my uncle about the time I had in crossing this river and about where it was located and he said it was the North Canadian River) there were no bridges and the river was up. All I could do was ride my horse off into it; he was a large horse weighing about four-

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teen hundred pounds and I was only a young boy, then, weighing about one hundred pounds. My horse and I both went under when I first jumped him off into the stream, but he brought me out on the other side all wet and cold. After riding a few miles in my wet clothes, I came upon a white family living in a two room log house. But before I got to the house I rode out into a cleared up place and met a white man breaking ground with one horse to a plow. I told him about my trouble and he took me to his house and let me wear some of his clothes while mine were drying and his wife fixed me something to eat and I spent the rest of the day and night with this family. The next morning his wife gave me some corn bread and fried meat, enough to last three or four days, and from this man I learned in what direction to ride to find Pauls Valley. When I got to my uncle's home northeast of Pauls Valley, I still had some corn bread and fried meat. I went to work on my uncle's farm for thirteen dollars a month and board; I worked for my uncle until 1892, then I went to work for the Harris Brothers, near Mill Creek, on their ranch. They were the sons of Silas Harris, one time governor of the Chickasaw Nation. I only worked for them one year, then I came back to Pauls Valley and was married.

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By this time I had enough money to start farming for myself. I rented some land from Zack Gardner, who owned a grist mill and a cotton gin on the river east of Pauls Valley. I have worked many a day at this old gin, tramping cotton into the press with my feet. At that time the gin would only run from sunup until sundown as we didn't have lights. I was paid seventy-five cents a day. The mill and gin both were pulled by a large wheel fixed out in the water; one morning the mill and gin were both running when all of a sudden something went wrong with the wheel and everything stopped. Zack Gardner, the man who owned the mill and gin, took a catfish off the wheel, the fish had got caught in the wheel. That day for dinner we all had a big fish fry at Mr. Gardner's house.

I now live on a farm southwest of Wynnewood, Oklahoma.