

PULLEN, J. H.

~~INTERVIEW~~

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

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WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

#12899

PULLEN, J. H.

INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Lula Austin

This report made on (date) February 2, 1938

- 1. Name J. H. Pullen
- 2. Post Office Address Durant, Oklahoma.
- 3. Residence address (or location) Northwest part of town.
- 4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 25 Year 1865
- 5. Place of birth Arkansas.

6. Name of Father Eliza W. Pullen Place of birth Georgia

7. Name of Mother Betty Hutcherson Place of birth Alabama.

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 _____

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Lula Austin,
Investigator,
February 3, 1938.

Interview with J. H. Pullen
Durant, Oklahoma.

I lived when a young boy on the banks of Red River at a place which was known as Delaware Bend. This place is part of Red River now.

The Texas outlaws and Territory outlaws had a day of spree and night of fighting there. Father operated a little store in connection the post office there which was some distance from our home. I was nine years old and my mother sent me early one morning for coffee. As I reached the store I saw a dead Indian on the step. I ran back to the house and told my father. He went down and found thirteen dead Indians around the store.

* We lived in an old fort house which was made of hewed square post oak logs laid in line, two stories high and people came from miles around when a raid was expected. There was a row of port holes where men could kneel and shoot from and a row above that where they could stand and shoot. A

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door was at each end of the hall with wooden hinges and there was one window in each end fastened on the inside.

E. W. Pullen paid Henry Turner \$105.00 for work and cotton and Henry was on his way to J. S. Dickey's at Brownwood, Texas, when Jack Whittington waylaid and murdered him. Whittington knocked him in the head and cut his throat. Young Henry Turner rode up just as Jack committed the deed and tried to run over him with his horse. The only weapon young Henry had was a .22 cap and ball pistol which he shot empty at Whittington. My father and others followed Whittington to the Texas side and found him at the Blankenship gin where he had gone to warm. He was caught and turned over to the United States Marshal, tried at Fort Smith and sentenced to be hung - the first man Judge Parker sentenced to hang. My father was a witness in the case.

At Henry Turner's funeral his seven sons all had from two to six guns on. My father was the only one at the funeral without a gun on.

In Ailsworth in 1905 it was so wild around there it was dangerous for a woman to be on the street. Drunk men

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would walk along and shoot windows and lights out. I was asked to be Justice of Peace and refused, but was appointed anyway. The first bunch I arrested I fined \$10.00 and costs and told them each offense I would double the dose.

The first 25¢ I ever made was a shinplaster. I remember it was in 1873, a very dry year - no crops were made. We went to school without bread. My father went to Jefferson, Texas, in an ox-wagon for food stuff. It took him from three to six weeks. I remember before he returned we had eaten or loaned out all we had ~~except~~ beef. We children would steal jerked beef from old Rush Washington as we passed his house on our way to school.

In 1874 my mother parched wheat and okra seed and ground it for our coffee.

The first drought I remember was in 1873, the next was in 1881, the next in 1896 and the next in 1911, coming every seven to eight years.

One morning cattle rustlers came by our house with about eight or ten thousand cattle, some of the men drove two fat beeves in our lot and slaughtered them, taking

only the hind quarters. Father recognized some of the cattle as belonging to a neighbor, Mr. Morris. I was eleven years old, so Father told me to saddle my pony and go for Mr. Morris. When Mr. Morris arrived Father called a bunch of Vigilantes together and followed the rustlers and all were killed but one.. He was captured and later hung to a tree and shot. There were twenty-nine of them. Father got scared and we left then, for fear some of the outlaws pals knew he gave the alarm.

We only raised one crop in the four years we lived there - no rain and when it did rain the grasshoppers ate the crop.

My mother would never answer a knock at the door without getting her cap and ball pistol first. As a young woman she was never afraid, but as she grew older she was afraid of everything.

My father brought the first oil lamp we owned for which he paid \$1.00, from Jefferson, Texas. Before that we had used a lamp made from strings braided and placed in a can and grease poured over the string. We also used pine knots in the fireplace.

I read Tom Paine's "Age of Reason" by the light of a pine knot. I was fifteen and had to slip up after my parents had gone to bed and read it. It took me about a year to read the book. I cut the title off, so if Father found it he would have to read it to find out what it was about. He later read it.

We had very little to read. Father took the Courier Journal, published in Kentucky. At first it only came once a month, then twice a month. About fifty people in and around us borrowed it to read.

I have my Blue Back Speller and Ray's First Year Arithmetic that I used fifty-four years ago. The first school I attended the benches were made from logs hewed and put together by boring holes in the back and putting straight pieces in for legs.

I have seen a bunch of Chickasaw Indians trade two hundred head of cattle for a barrel of whiskey. They would have the cattle corraled and that night stampede them and drive them back home.

When I was four years old my parents were on their way to Texas, traveling along with a train of thirty-two

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wagons. We camped at Carriage Point and the Indians stole my Father's horses - four of them. I remember we could see the Indian but never get close enough to catch him as he darted into the woods.