

McGINNIS, GEORGE W.

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Carl R. Sherwood,
Investigator,
February 9, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. George W. McGinnis,
536 North Katy Ave., Muskogee, Oklahoma.

I was born August 26, 1874, near Webb City, Arkansas. My father was Elija McGinnis, born in middle Tennessee. My mother was Nancy Ellen Cooper, born in Arkansas.

My parents came to the Indian Territory in 1892 and rented land from Robert Gentry in the Deep Fork bottom southwest of Checotah. My father took a contract making fence posts for Robert Gentry, who had miles of fencing to build for cattle pastures; we received two cents per post.

~~The timber then was large, tall and plentiful, which enabled us to make hundreds of posts each day.~~

My brothers and I had about two dozen steel traps of various sizes which we would bait and set along the banks of Deep Fork; some were placed in the edge of water and others on trees which had fallen into the creeks and rivers. In these traps we generally caught raccoons and mink. For opossums we would set our traps at hollow trees; for skunks we would set traps along the rocky ledges at the top of hills

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and in the Canyons. In this way we would sell several hundred dollars worth of furs each winter, which provided clothes and food for the family and was real sport for us boys.

During the spring and summer we would get extra work from the cattlemen, repairing fences, setting new posts when needed, stretching new wire, and enlarging pastures.

In 1902 we moved over in the Cherokee Nation, about four miles east of the present town of Porum. My father rented a farm from Pat Foley.

When the Midland Valley Railroad started building their road from Fort Smith, Arkansas, to Wichita, Kansas, I worked on the construction gang laying track, and grading for the road bed.

A. I. Ingram built the first brick store building in Porum, and when finished moved his stock of goods from his store at Starville to the new brick building..

Tom Davis built the second brick building which was a two-story; he also organized the first bank.

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In August, 1907, I married Miss Fannie Crain, a Cherokee maiden, and daughter of Lacy Crain. We moved to Briartown and farmed until the drouth and panic reached Oklahoma. The dry years broke many of us on the farms, and since the drouth most farmers are not able to go back to farming. I am now working at any work I can obtain.
