

ROBERTS, ELI

INTERVIEW

#1271

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

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Field Worker's name Jennie Selfridge.This report made on (date) May 5, 1937.1. Name Eli Roberts2. Post Office Address Berwyn, Oklahoma.3. Residence address (or location) Three miles north of Berwyn, across
Coal Creek.4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 15, Year 1866.5. Place of birth Boggy Depot, Indian Territory.6. Name of Father Ned Roberts, Place of birth Mississippi.Other information about father Was a slave of Suzan and Malsie Colbert.7. Name of Mother Sarah Colbert's mother was
Lonie Colbert. Place of birth Mississippi.

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 3.

Jennie Selfridge,
Field Worker.

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An Interview With Eli Roberts,
Berwyn, Oklahoma.

In 1867, Eli Robert's father moved from Boggy
It was
Depot to Spring Creek, /one and one and one-half miles
west of the present town of Milo. Other colored fam-
ilies moving west and settling in what is now Carter
County at this time were the Stephensons, Cohees, and
Cobbs. Ned Roberts lived on Spring Creek two years,
then moved to a place near where Dawes Academy (colored)
was later established. This location was in Section 2,
Township 3 south, Range 2 east.

Dawes Academy was first founded by the Calvery
Baptist Church, probably about 1876, since Eli Roberts
attended school there in 1879, and it had been in operation
a few years then. The school was taken over by the govern-
ment about this time, and James Bank (colored) continued
as teacher.

There were no white settlers in the vicinity of what
is now Berwyn and Springer in 1866.

Old man Tom Humby (colored) lived on what is now
known as the Henderson flat. William Abram lived one and
three-fourths miles southwest of the Dawes Academy. Abner
Richardson, an uncle of Ned Roberts, lived three-fourths
of a mile east of the present town of Berwyn. Aunt Lucy
Cobb and her son, Robert Cobb, established a place

four miles east of Berwyn on the Washita, before the Roberts family left Boggy Depot.

Walker Martin was the only white man in the settlement. He lived near where Caddo Creek empties into the Washita River. He moved here from Atoka, where he had operated a large grape press. After he moved to the Washita, he began the cultivation of a large orchard and grape vineyard, and people went for miles to buy fruit and wine from him. About twenty years prior to this time, Martin had killed a man in Texas, and after he spent several years on the Washita, the United States officers learned where he was. He knew they would get him, so he committed suicide on the railroad track north of Durant.

Uncle Charlie Henderson was the next settler in this country. He established a store on the Washita at the location which was later known as Dresden.

Before Henderson's store was established, the negro settlers traded at old Mill Creek. Jimmy Davis operated a large store there. They carried their grain to Governor Harris's mill at Mill Creek. Eli Roberts worked for Charlie Henderson and drove an ox wagon from Dresden to Gainsville and Denison. He usually hauled cotton or hogs on the trip over, and hauled groceries and dry goods coming back. On two occasions he drove a herd of hogs from Dresden to Gainsville.

Jim and Pink Lee lived over in the yellow hills northeast of Ardmore. They were at this location when they killed Jim Guy and Andy and Jim Roff. They lived in a log house and when they saw the officers coming, they pulled the chinks out of the house and began shooting. They were both killed a few days later by United States Marshal Heck Thomas and his officers.

The first store at Springer was located on Buzzard Creek, and was probably established by Jim Rushing.

A man by the name of Fox established one of the first farms near Springer, and old man Springer established a ranch there.