

Notice of Copyright

Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.

Use of certain published materials and manuscripts is restricted by law, by reason of their origin, or by donor agreement. For the protection of its holdings, the Western History Collections also reserves the right to restrict the use of unprocessed materials, or books and documents of exceptional value and fragility. Use of any material is subject to the approval of the Curator.

Citing Resources from the Western History Collections

For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

An example of a proper citation:

Oklahoma Federation of Labor Collection, M452, Box 5, Folder 2. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

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

AXTON, BENJAMIN MCGEE INTERVIEW 4637

Field Worker's name Ethel E. Palmer

This report made on (date) June 19, 1937

1. Name Benjamin McGee Axton

2. Post office address Leedey

3. Residence address (or location) Rural Route

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 2 Year 1867

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth: Kentucky

Other information about father A Baptist Minister

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth Carroll
County, 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 _____

Ethel E. Palmer
Interviewer
June 19, 1937

Interview with
Benjamin McGee Axton
Leedey, Oklahoma.

My first trip to Oklahoma was in 1881 when I was twelve years old. I came with some more people to No Man's Land. They were looking for a location. I traveled into Oklahoma on a bicycle. There were quite a number of people settled along the Canadian River, as at that time there was a boom on in No Man's Land, but people soon starved out and moved away.

The nearest market was Wichita, Kansas. We went home in 1889. We returned to Oklahoma, settling at what is called the Trail Flats. We moved in a covered wagon with three head of horses to the wagon. It took us eight days to make the trip from Kansas here. I don't know of a furrow being plowed on the flats when I came to this country.

Our first post office was Camargo. This was a cedar log building and it is still standing in the same place. Camargo is in its third location. It was at

- 2 -

first three miles southeast of where it is now. Then it was moved back north. When the railroad was established the town moved to the railroad to where it is now.

El Reno was our trading post. This was one hundred seventy-five miles and it took us fourteen and one-half days to make the trip. We usually stayed in town about four hours. My horses and I, too, have done without water for a day and a half at a time and I would just have parched corn to eat. We only knew one route or trail to go those days. I can well remember this old trail. We went to Camargo, then on to Jack Long Spring, followed the old trail to Rawhide Creek, then on to where Seiling now is, then to Fort Cantonement (established 1875, later moved to Fort Reno) then on to El Reno.

I helped build the first house on the flats with just common old plank floors. When the house was completed the owner gave a big dance. We danced to the music of the violin and harp. We boys would always wear our boots and carry our shoes in our pocket. Just before we got to a dance we would stop and put our shoes on.

- 3 -

We lived in a dugout with a fireplace in it and had fair furniture for those days.

The first Ford I remember seeing was a one cylinder car. It had two or three steps to go up to get in it. It was at a big picnic and they took people for rides, three miles for 25 cents.

There were lots of turkeys and deer across the river. I've seen eighty-four turkeys in one drove and twenty-six deer in one run.

There was a Methodist preacher by the name of Stone who held a six weeks revival on the flats. There were 25 covered wagons camped for all the meeting, some people lived in tents. Lots of the cowboys were converted.

I've been to places with Red Buck and Miller. They seemed to be nice men at times and were very nice and polite to women. They were known, however, as very bad men.