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BRIDGES, A. B.

INTERVIEW

9969

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

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BRIDGES, A. B.

INTERVIEW

#9969

Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson

This report made on (date) February 11 1938

1. Name A. B. Bridges

2. Post Office Address Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 29 Year 1869

5. Place of birth Mississippi

6. Name of Father W. W. Bridges Place of birth North Carolina

7. Name of Mother Lucy Ann Adair Place of birth Tennessee

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.

BRIDGES, A. B.

INTERVIEW

#9969

Maurice R. Anderson  
Investigator  
January 11, 1938.

Interview with A. B. Bridges,  
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

I was born in 1859, in Mississippi, and came to the Indian Territory with my family in 1884. We came on the train to Gainesville, Texas, and were met there by my uncle, Watson Wells, who lived at old Thackerville in the Chickasaw Nation.

There was no railroad from Gainesville to Thackerville at that time so my uncle met us in a wagon and hauled what few things we brought with us to his home and my family stayed at his home until I was able to lease a farm.

The first year I farmed my uncle loaned me a pair of mules and by borrowing a few plow tools from neighbors I made my first crop in the Indian Territory. Farming wasn't new to me for I had been raised on a farm back in Mississippi.

I only had a turning plow to break the land with and a Georgia stock to lay off the rows and I had to drop the corn by hand. I raised more corn that year than I ever did at one time back in Mississippi. I had to haul my cotton to Gainesville, Texas, to market it, as there was no market for cotton in that time at Thackerville.

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We lived in log houses and there were very few barns to put what we raised in. We would pile our corn up and build a rail fence around it to keep the stock off. We didn't have roads then to speak of, only cattle trails, and there were no bridges to cross the creeks or rivers. We would have to drive twenty to thirty miles farther in going from Thacker-ville to Gainesville than one would have to go today, as we would have to keep to the open country all we could so we could dodge all the creeks that we could. There were no bridges across Red River at that time but there was a ferry crossing and it cost \$1.00 for a wagon and team. If the river was low we would ford it to save the dollar.

I bought and traded for cattle and in a few years I owned quite a herd of cattle. In 1885 I remember I helped my uncle drive about a hundred head of cattle to White Bead Hill and he sold them to James Rennie, who at that time owned a store at White Bead and also was a cattle buyer.

There was only one store at Pauls Valley at that time so White Bead was the main trading point for that part of the country. There were a few stores, a church house, a boarding

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house at White Bead and a stage line went through there from Caddo to Fort Sill.

The Territory at that time was more of a cattle country than a farming country—from White Bead Hill to Thackerville about all one could see then was cattle. There were no fences and the cattle grazed where they wanted to; they wouldn't have to go far to find grass as there was plenty of it.

There were plenty of deer then and turkeys went in droves like cattle. We never thought anything about them and when we wanted a turkey we didn't have to go far to get one. People lived good in the part of the country I lived in for we always had plenty to eat. There were very few doctors in those days nor was there much need of a doctor then, as there was not much sickness. I know we only had the doctor in our house one time in four years.

The railroad was built from Gainesville through the part of the country where I lived in 1886, and old Thackerville was moved nearer to the railroad as the railroad missed the old town-site about two miles. After the railroad was built it was a great help to the farmers and merchants for before that we had

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to freight all our things by wagon from Gainesville and the mail was carried on a horse and only came into Thackerville once a week.

In 1889 I sold out my cattle and put in a general store at Thackerville with a Mr. Davis. The store was known as Bridges and Davis and we operated this store until it burned down in 1892.

School conditions at Thackerville were very poor then, so I moved my family to Gainesville, Texas, where they had very good schools and I went in the grocery business at Gainesville.

I now live in Pauls Valley.