Form A-(S-149)

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

#13628 **211**

JOHNSON, EARL   INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name _____ Lula Austin _____

This report made on (date) _____ April 15, _____ 193 8

1. Name _____ Mrs. Earl Johnson _____

2. Post Office Address _____ Durant, Oklahoma. _____

3. Residence address (or location) _____ 1523 West Walnut Street. _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father **Zack H. Tate** _____ Place of birth **Union County, Mississippi**

   Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother **Martha Letitia Wells** _____ Place of birth **Mississippi**

   Other information about mother _____

           Parents of ten children - Two dead.

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
this form. Number of sheets attached _____ .

JOHNSON, EARL   INTERVIEW.   #13629

An Interview with Mrs. Earl Johnson, Durant, Oklahoma.
By - Lula Austin, Investigator.
April 15, 1938.

My father came here in 1884, settling at Thackerville.
The first two years he raised cattle and hogs, also freighted
to Gainsville, Texas. My mother would stay alone and keep
the doors barred while Father was away. The Indians would
come and jump their horses over the fence but never bothered
anything. I remember Father telling about taking a wagon
load of hogs to Denison and only receiving ten dollars for
them.

After remaining here four years my parents went back
to Mississippi where they remained two years, then came back
in a covered wagon, driving their cattle. Father said when
they crossed Red River the quicksand was so bad they were
almost drawn under.

Father served as County Tax Assessor of Johnson County
for eight years; as Sunday school superintendent at Enterprise
for fifteen years; helped to build the school house and super-
intended the laying off of the cemetery at Enterprise. I re-
member the first burial I attended at Enterprise; the ceme-
tery was such a dense forest that the men had to stoop to

2

get through the brush and often had to set the casket down
to break the brush away, but now each May 28th for the last
twenty-seven years, every one who has a relative buried there
comes for the day and we clean and decorate the graves.

Father also taught school four years while at Thacker-
ville. He often said if he had his life to live over again
he would live it exactly as he had done. He was a Master
Mason and during the World War he worked all night for three
nights taking in boys who were going to War and wanted to
be Masons.

Father was stripping cane to make syrup and scratched
his finger so that it became infected. Dr. Jim Hardy came
to see him and found blood poison had set up. He had brought
no instruments with him, so sharpened a case knife and cut
Father's finger off. That happened thirty-two years ago.

Father and Mother celebrated their 50th wedding anni-
versary before they died. The cake with 50 candles weighed
50 pounds and 78 guests were fed. To each of us children
was given a picture of our parents with the following verse com-
posed by Mr. Tate;

3

Children dear, you are very near,

To these old hearts of ours.

These fifty years have brought joy and tears,

And through it all, God has shown his power.

Let's put Him first as we journey on,

Until we get to the end of the way,

Be honest, truthful, fearless and just,

Is the prayer of your parents each day.

Indians would come for miles to get my father to cure
their toothache which he cured by prayer. Before his death
he revealed this prayer to me.

Doctor J. H. and Mrs. Hardy delivered a little baby
girl to Mrs. Charles Blain in a little hut with a dirt floor.
When she grew up this girl married a millionaire and lived
in Henryetta, Oklahoma. Her husband owned a chain of picture
shows.

I have a Bible given to Father by his father in 1880,
published in 1872 and on the fly leaf Grandfather wrote;
"Peruse carefully the following pages, giving heed to their
precepts that you may be wise unto salvation". I also have
a moustache cup given to Father by Governor Mosley of Mississippi.