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INDEX CARDS

Choctaw Nation  
Ranches  
Dawes Commission  
Toll Gate  
Roads and Trails

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

Field Worker's name Lawrence A. Williams

This report made on (date) August 6 1937

1. Name W. H. Barber

2. Post Office Address Whitesboro, Oklahoma

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

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year 1870

5. Place of birth Mena, Arkansas

6. Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

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 \_\_\_\_\_

BARBER, W. H. INTERVIEW.

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INTERVIEW WITH W. H. BARBER  
Lawrence A. Williams,  
Interviewer

Mr. Barber's mother and father both lived and died in Arkansas. Mr. Barber was born in Mena, Arkansas, in the year of 1870. He came to Indian Territory in 1884. He was working for a man by the name of Auther Chowening who was a cattle man, and they made a trip through the valley once a month. His story is as follows:

Our business was to deliver fifty head of cattle to the Indians every month. We were camped on a little creek called Sycamore Creek. The next morning when we got up to continue our journey with the cattle, all of them had been driven off except three or four. We began looking for the cattle by following their tracks. We had not gone far when we met an Indian on a painted pony who asked us where we were going. He told him we were looking for our cattle that had been driven off during the night. He told us he would bring the cows back for fifty dollars. We gave him the money and he had the herd driven back to where we were inside of an hour or an hour and a half. We then went on our way to Tuskahoma, where we usually delivered the cattle.

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The steers were usually worth about fifty dollars a head. After the Dawes Commission came the Indians would pay almost any price asked for either cattle or horses. Once I was driving through with a wagon and team when Charlie Onubbee saw one of the mules and decided he wanted it. I would not let him have it because I had to have the mule to get back home. He would leave the store for a while then come back and make me a better offer. Finally he came in and offered me two hundred dollars for the mule. I could not resist this temptation, so sold him the mule and bought an Indian pony to go home. He paid me the two hundred dollars in five dollar gold pieces.

I remember there was a toll gate somewhere on the Arkansas-Indian Territory line, near what is now Big Cedar. An old Indian Councilman had been given the right to use this as a means of making a living. He usually charged a cent a head for stock and seven cents for a man to go through, when he was sober enough to be at the gate when they went through.

At one time the whole country was covered with both Indians and whites who had the smallpox. One night as we were driving a herd of cattle down the valley the

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Kiamichi River got up and we had to spend two nights in the Indian village close to Big Cedar. Then we got word that smallpox had broken out in the village and knew we had to get out of the place, and regardless of how many cows were lost we pushed them into the river and left. Two of our men took the smallpox later. The Indians were afraid of the disease more than the whites, for due to their dark skin they seldom got over the smallpox once they took it.

At times when we had a bunch of cattle bedded down for the night panthers would walk into the herd and kill a calf, even with us shooting at them.

The roads were marked by blazes on trees. If anyone was lost in the woods and came to a road or trail where the trees had one blaze, he could follow this and would finally come to a two blaze road; then following this road he would come to a three blaze road and finally to a small town or village. The Arkansas-Stringtown road was known as the Three Blaze Road.

The Indians were very shy and afraid of a white man.

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It was almost impossible to get them to come out and talk to you when we went to their house. About the only way we could get to talk to them was to ride or lead a very pretty horse to their door. They would be interested in buying the horse and after getting them out to look at the horse we would talk to them about what we were interested.