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BUTNER, GEORGE INTERVIEW

#6671

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Opening-1889
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Freighter
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BUTNER, GEORGE. INTERVIEW.

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Form A-(S-149)

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

6671

Field Worker's name Otis Hume 4267-2070

This report made on (date) June 25, 1937

1. Name George Butner

2. Post Office Address Wewoka, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 9 miles north of Wewoka

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month -- Day -- Year 1866

5. Place of birth Prairie Grove, Arkansas

6. Name of Father J. S. Butner Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about father Served in Civil War -- Southern side.

7. Name of Mother Sara Hooper Place of birth Pennsylvania

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 6.

T. E., George and Jim Butner are three brothers, born in Arkansas, near Prairie Grove, Madison County. Their father, J. S. Butner, was a fine old Christian man who served in the Civil War.

In the year 1889 T. E. and George Butner decided that the west was calling them so with their team and wagon they struck out for Oklahoma. They made the run and staked them some lots in Perry. They sold these lots soon after, making some good money on them.

They left Perry going to Shawnee, Oklahoma, where they worked for about a year. T. E. Butner began hauling freight from Oklahoma City and he hauled the first load of freight into Shawnee, and George Butner made the first brick that was laid in Shawnee.

They came to their present location nine miles north of Wewoka in 1890, bringing with them a team of mules, schooner wagon, and one yoke of oxen, a few plow tools, their bed and a few cooking vessels.

They leased an acreage of land and began breaking the sod for a crop. They also did plowing for anyone who wanted them.

They lived in the schooner wagon for two years, then built a house of logs in which they lived for about six years.

They worked and saved and secured all the land that they could get, until now they own 1,100 acres of land.

They were always leaders in their community, willing to do anything for the uplift of the community. It is said that they gave, did, and sacrificed more than anyone in the country for the community. Everyone was always welcome at their house any time they wanted to come.

Several years after they came T. E. Butner went back to Arkansas and married. His other brother, Jim, his wife, father, and mother all came back to Oklahoma with him. T. E. and Jim reared a fine family of children but George never married. T. E. and Jim have two large modern homes. They always get along together, what belongs to one belongs to all and all the children get the same consideration at all times.

They never had any trouble with the Indians or natives for many a time they had to help them.

When they made the run in 1889, there was a rush to get land. They would take their teams from the wagons and ride them. The people made the run every way they could get to travel. During the time they

were in the race many a spill was taken. On one occasion an old man and his wife were riding in a buggy just ahead of them and just before they got to Perry, the horses ran into a ditch, spilling the man and his wife and hurting the old man very bad. The woman, seeing that she was close to Perry, broke and ran on into town, leaving her husband there on the ground, and staked her claim. But the next day after the streets were surveyed, her claim was in the street.

T. E. Butner went on to Shawnee and began freighting from Oklahoma City. He thinks he was instrumental in breaking up a bunch of crooks.

There was a United States Marshal from Oklahoma City who with a negro who lived near Wewoka would trick the Indians. This negro would get some whiskey, give it to an Indian and this Indian would swear that he bought it from another Indian. The negro would send for the marshal to come after the whiskey peddler. Both Indians would be taken to Oklahoma City, where they would be tried and fined very heavily, and the negro would come back with a wagon load of groceries. Mr. Butner wrote to Washington about this marshal and the negro and in about three weeks they were arrested and sent to prison.

One day while he was plowing in the field, two marshals came by, looking for some outlaws. On telling them that he had not seen them, they left. The marshals had not been gone but about an hour till the outlaws came by. Mr. Butner told the outlaws about the marshals looking for them. The outlaws laughed and asked "which way did they go?" He told them and they took their field glasses and looked in the direction the marshals had gone. They spied the marshals looking back at them with their glasses. They directed Mr. Butner if the marshals came back, to tell them that the outlaws were going down on the creek to cook dinner and if they (the marshals) wanted to eat with them to come on down that they had plenty for all. The marshals came back looking for them. Mr. Butner told them what the outlaws said but the marshals turned to the other direction, leaving the outlaws to eat their dinner alone.

One day one of the negroes died and all the negroes gathered to have a setting-up where they all sang songs, prayed, and some of the negroes got drunk; then trouble got started with many of them fighting. The next day at the funeral there were one or two killed

and some crippled, so that night they had another big setting-up.