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

444

BARR, JOHN THOMAS

INTERVIEW

9632

Field Worker's name Raymond Jantz
This report made on (date) Monday, January 10, 1938

1. Name John Thomas Barr
2. Post Office Address Stecker, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) East Boundary.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 11 Year 1852
5. Place of birth Missouri

6. Name of Father Sam Barr Place of birth Missouri
Other information about father Farmer - Fought in Civil War.
7. Name of Mother Joanne String Place of birth 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 5

BARR, JOHN THOMAS

INTERVIEW

9632

Jantz, Raymond
Investigator
January 10, 1938.

Interview with Mr. Barr.

I have been a farmer, cowboy, freighter, traildriver, and carpenter. I moved to Pauls Valley sixty-one years ago as a farmer and from that time I started a number of things. I hauled the first load of lumber from Denison, Texas, to Purcell when Purcell was first started. I also freighted from Gainesville, Texas, to White Bend. I worked for the 7C ranch for some time. A man named Bremier was boss of this outfit. We herded cattle over the townsite of Oklahoma City years before the Opening. We swam the cattle across the Canadian River at a bend close by Oklahoma City. On the opposite side of the river we were met with fresh horses, two of which were later drowned. These horses were brought to continue the drive on to the 7C headquarters. I never went on any of the drives to the northern markets in Kansas. We mostly drove the cattle to Red Fork on the Arkansas River.

School

Our first school was held under a brush arbor. The seats were of split logs with pegs for legs. School was held this way for several summers. Later a school house

was built of logs which also had split log benches.

Civil War Times

We saw some really hard times during the Civil War. A band of men calling themselves Jayhawkers ran over the country helping themselves to any supplies they could find among the settlers. They took sugar, salt, flour, corn-meal or meat, and sometimes ran off cattle and horses and hogs. They took anything of value that could be exchanged for money or food and supplies. The Jayhawkers sometimes killed men and women but this was only on occasions when they were resisted. They mostly took clothing and food. At this time we lived near the town of Neosho, Missouri. My father died during the Civil War.

The Chickasaw Nation.

In the early days in the Chickasaw Nation we hauled our corn to the mill to be ground. The mill where we had most of our meal made was located about forty miles from home, on the Washita River. We sometimes took it to Uncle Jack Garderner's water mill which was just eighteen miles from home on the Washita River.

Before the Opening of Oklahoma.

There was a man named David L. Payne who organized a band of land seekers and brought them into the Territory before the opening. The people who came with Payne were

called "Sooners". They were driven out of the Territory several times but they always came back. Finally Payne was arrested by the United States soldiers who were guarding the northern boundary and carried out to jail. David L. Payne later died on the street of one of the border towns. At the time that Payne was arrested the "Sooners" were hurried out of the Territory with one of Payne's mowing machines and one cookstove and some other articles. This was close to the 7C ranch lands on which I was working at that time.

Laws of the Territory.

People were allowed to drive their cattle through the Territory and to graze them on the grass but they usually were charged 25¢ a head. Ranchmen were allowed to graze their cattle on the grass and to put up cattle camps. They were allowed to put up tents and camp outfits but couldn't dig dugouts or half dugouts because these were classed as permanent improvements and ranchmen who did these things were run out as squatters.