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INDEX CARDS

Chickasaw Nation
Fords and Ferries
Opening-1889

3721
4321

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

Field Worker's name John C. Kerr

This report made on (date) June 14 193

1. Name James L. Beckham

2. Post Office Address Perry, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 310 9th Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 23 Year 1870

5. Place of birth Mount Vernon, Missouri

6. Name of Father M. Beckham Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father Civil War Veteran

7. Name of Mother Millie Pennington 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 2

John C. Kerr
Field Worker
June 14, 1937

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Interview with James L. Beckham
310 9th Street, Perry, Okla.
Father-M. Beckham
Mother-Millie Pennington

I am sixty-seven years old. I was born at Mount Vernon, Missouri, October 23, 1870. My parents moved to Hillsboro, Texas, when I was a small boy. We traveled with a team and covered wagon. In 1882, we moved up to Gainsville, Texas, across the country by team, driving around canyons and fording streams. When we came to a stream and it was up we would camp until we could cross. Sometimes there would be quite a colony gather, waiting for the water to run down.

I called Gainsville my home until about 1897. During the period from 1882 until 1897, I was in and out of the Chickasaw Nation numerous times. We hunted lots in west of where Ardmore is now located; also northwest. There were lots of wild turkey; quite a good many deer; quail and prairie chicken were plentiful. Fishing also was good. We would make these trips by wagon, crossing the Red River at the ford unless it was on a tear; then we ferried across. In 1888, I rode a horse from Gainsville over through Dennison, Texas, and up in to what

was then the Creek Nation. I stopped at old Man Callahan's ranch and worked quite some time. This ranch was about two and a half miles south of Muskogee, which was then only a very small place.

There was an Indian agency close to Muskogee and the Government paid the Indians about every six months. They rode in from all over the Creek Nation, mostly horseback. There were no roads, just trails. Most all of the country was used for grazing cattle. Sometimes the Indians and cowboys had some pretty wild times. There were lots of gambling, horse trading, and horse racing.

In 1889, I went up to the opening of old Oklahoma. People traveled in ox carts, wagons and by ox teams, and on horseback. The roads were built all through the Chickasaw Nation, all going to the promised land. The Chickasaw Nation was between Texas and Oklahoma. I made the race with a friend although I was not old enough to get a claim, but I liked the excitement. My friend located

on a farm close to where Yukon, Oklahoma, is now located. I stayed with him a while before riding back to Texas.

In 1893, I married Armanda Oliver in Denton County, Texas, and we later moved up east of Ardmore and farmed there a while. We then moved up to Stella, Oklahoma, which was in the "Pot County". I surely did raise some good crops up there.

In 1909, I moved up in Noble County, hauling all my stuff in a covered wagon, and where I farmed for twenty-five years. We had a family of six. In 1934, my wife and I moved to Perry.

Question. What do you do now, Mr. Beckham?

Answer. Oh! I have me a cow, some chickens, and I have the finest garden you ever saw. Mandy will put up a lot of garden "sas" for this winter.