

FERGUSON, JOHN S.

INTERVIEW

8137

255

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

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8137

Field Worker's name John F. Daugherty

This report made on (date) July 31 1937

1. Name John S. Ferguson,

2. Post Office Address Davis, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 4 Year 1837

5. Place of birth Tennessee

6. Name of Father Robert Ferguson Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father minister

7. Name of Mother Minerva O'Neal Place of birth Tennessee

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 4

FERGUSON, JOHN S.

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8137

John F. Daugherty,
Investigator,
July 31, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. John S. Ferguson,
Davis, Oklahoma.

. Father was Robert C. Ferguson, born in Tennessee in 1837. Mother was Minerva O'Neal Ferguson, born in Tennessee in 1837. Father was a minister. There were thirteen children in our family. I was born January 4, 1857, in Tennessee. I was married to Theodosia Harwell in October 1879. We moved to the Indian Territory in 1886, and located at Prices Falls in the Chickasaw Nation. Not long after we located here I went back to Texas to help move a friend to the Territory. When I reached Red River the water was high and I unhitched my mules and started across on one of them. The ferry was at the opposite bank, and I couldn't find the ferry man. When I got across I went to Ed Steens' Saloon and as I approached the Lee Boys, who were noted desperadoes and cattle thieves, rushed out and covered me with their Winchesters. They asked what I was doing there and I told them. They escorted me to the ferry and found the man for me. We

FERGUSON, JOHN S.

INTERVIEW

8137

- 2 -

ferried across and got my wagon and other mule, and I was glad to get away from there.

During the first few years I lived here, I farmed. We got such low prices for our products that we decided to organize a Farmers' Alliance, the purpose of which was to receive more for what we produced and pay less for what we bought. In connection with this we had a Farmers' Alliance Store established at Davis. Anybody belonging to the Alliance could trade at the store and pay in the fall when the crops were gathered. This organization died in its infancy though. The store went into bankruptcy the first year. They would ship in a carload of flour, and it was hardly enough to go around. The farmers carried it off in a very short time, and nobody paid for it. So it wasn't long until the store had all of its goods out on credit, and could no longer exist. Each farmer belonging was to pay dues of ten cents a month, to help the organization going. So many failed to pay, that it was soon a thing of the past.

FERGUSON, JOHN S.

INTERVIEW

8137

- 3 -

I am a Missionary Baptist Preacher. I had two churches over which I had the pastorship. One was at Hickory and one at Elmore City. I preached at each twice a month. I had a gray mule which I rode to my charge each Saturday. I preached on Saturday night, and twice on Sunday. I had a small valise which I strapped around my shoulders, in which I carried my Bible and a hymn book. My hymn book was the only one we had to sing from. I would read each stanza of the song while the congregation listened, and then I would lead and they would follow, singing what I had read. There were no musical instruments used in church services in those days. We had services in the homes for several years, then we started using the log school buildings. I seldom received money as pay for my services. They gave me food, and plenty of it. Wife and I had a good living.

I lived at Fort Arbuckle in 1912 and have resided in Davis since.

I paid a five dollar permit to the Chickasaw Government for the use of agriculture and grazing land.

FERGUSON, JOHN S.

INTERVIEW

8137

- 4 - 3

Note:

Reverend Ferguson lived at Fort Arbuckle in 1912, and there was no Fort there at that time. One of the rock buildings was used for a barn on Tom Grant's place when he lived there. He knew nothing about its early history.