

FOREMAN, SAMUEL STEPHENS. / INTERVIEW

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

FOREMAN, SAMUEL STEPHENS

INTERVIEW

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Field Worker's name Wylie Thornton,This report made on (date) November 26, 1937

1. Name Sam Stephens Foreman,
2. Post Office Address Tablequah, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) 520 Coy Avenue
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 12 Year 1870
5. Place of birth Cherokee County, then Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory, 3/4 mile southwest of present Illinois River bridge.
6. Name of Father George Foreman Place of birth In Georgia.
7. Name of Mother Mary Lowry before Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_  
marriage.  
 Other information about mother She was Switchler Lowry's  
daughter, born near Father's birthplace in Georgia.

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

Other information about father, He came as an emigrant.

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Wylie Thornton,  
Investigator,  
November 26, 1937.

Interview with Samuel Stephens Foreman,  
520 Coy Avenue,  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

I am a native-born Cherokee, born down here about three-fourths of a mile southwest of the present Illinois River bridge on Highway No. 62, sixty-one years ago next February 18th. My father died when I was six years of age. I have three brothers and two sisters. The oldest child of our family was William, and William became the head of the family after Father's death.

We remained at the old place for two years after Father's death, and I remember I didn't attend any school while we lived at this place, but in 1878 we moved to the Lowry's Prairie. This Prairie was a small section of prairie or an open country just north of the Cherokee County line into Delaware County now. Of course, these Counties used to be called Districts under the old Cherokee laws. The District we moved into was named after my grandfather on Mother's side, because he was the first and oldest settler in that whole country. His full name was Switch-Lowry.

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My grandfather built the first frame house in that part of the Cherokee Nation, and he was not like other Indians in that part of the Cherokee Nation. As long as he lived, he was questioned why he did this and why he did that, etc. For instance, when he built this first settlement house, he didn't hunt out a spring and a thickly wooded place as every other Indian had always done, but instead he searched all over this country for a wide open country, and finding this prairie, he built his home on a small knoll, or rather a small hill, out there in the middle of that bald prairie, and for this reason his name was not just a common Indian name. The Cherokee Indians accused him of overthrowing their beloved tradition, "of the home near a spring". Therefore his name was given him not as to other Indians, the name of some animal or bird, or the weather, but rather a name that would tell what he had done, "switched".

Switch Lowry was an early emigrant from the state of Georgia; so were my father and mother, old emigrants from the old home country.

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My mother died in the year of 1933 at the age of eighty-six years, and she is buried on the old Foreman place on the Lowry Prairie and Brother William died in 1935, and he is buried by the side of my mother.

The Foremans were allotted on and around this famous prairie and today owned by the Foremans, and we have agreed to keep it in the Foreman name forever.

Here are the names of the children of the family and you will notice one has been named after our famous Uncle: William B., Lucinda, Sam S., Switch, and Elias Foreman.

I had a half-sister, and her name was Eliza Rogers, the daughter of my mother and Dave Rogers, my stepfather.

I attended school near our new home for several years, to a school called "The Batt School". My teacher was Nancy Brown, a sister to Bill Triplett's wife, and also a sister to Isaac Grease's wife, whose name was Lillie Grease. These women became well known Cherokees.

The Bill Triplett Spring is located six miles northwest of Tahlequah and is known all over eastern Oklahoma. I am sure this spring is by far the best spring in this country.

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I attended school at the Male Seminary here in Tahlequah with a good many of the best citizens of Cherokee County, some of whom are Buff and Sid Wyly, Pete Cunningham, W. Penn Phillips of Tulsa, and Turner Edmonson who now lives in Grove, and many others who have made a nice mark in life, and I am very glad to say that most of the Male Seminary students have made some kind of an effort to fill a place of usefulness.

I was employed as an interpreter for the Dawes Commission in 1906 and remained with the enrollment commission during the entire period of six years, until the work was completed here.

I named one of my boys for Clifton Breckinridge, who worked with the Dawes Commission. I named him George for my father and Clifton as his middle name, George Clifton Foreman. This son is now a very successful school teacher, the superintendent of the Consolidated schools of Eufaula, Oklahoma.

One of the biggest changes in the affairs of the Cherokee people, when we went into the Cherokee enrollment period

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was that the Cherokee land was pastured and used for hay by the thousands of acres by a few men, and no one got any pay for the use of this land. There were no boundary lines, and no one owed anyone for use or possession of any land. These conditions could not be corrected so long as no one owned any certain land. I, for one Indian, highly appreciated allotment enrollment and also Statehood. I consider those steps and changes great steps forward, politically and socially, for any civilized people.

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