

4 1 9

INDEX CARDS

Pauls Valley
Gardner, Zack
Farming--Chickasaw Nation
Paul, Sam
Leasing--Chickasaw Nation
Crime--Chickasaw Nation
Openings--Cheyenne and Arapaho

Maurice B. Anderson

Field Worker,

May 21, 1937.

4119
287

Interview with Mr. J. T. French.

Paul Vally, Oklahoma.

Born 1861, Kentucky.

Father-W. H. French.

I came to the Indian Territory in the fall of 1886. A young man named Billie Klingsmith and myself left Denison, Texas, in a wagon working a span of mules. We were headed for Pauls Valley, to gather corn. As soon as we got to Pauls Valley, we went to work for Ab. Cochel, gathering corn for one dollar and twenty-five cents a day and board. We worked six weeks. Pauls Valley, then was located about a mile south of where it is now. At that time it consisted of one store, a blacksmith shop, and a stage stand. Miller and Green ran the store and the post office was in this store. Mr. Miller was the post-master and where Pauls Valley is now located, that land was in corn. I have gathered corn right where the new post office now stands, Zach Gardner owned a cotton gin and corn mill on the east side of the Washita River about two miles east of where Pauls Valley now stands. That year he had six hundred acres of corn and the farms in this valley then were making around a hundred bushels per acre. Billie Klingsmith and I liked this valley and we talked about ranting us a farm, but Billie thought it best to go back to Texas. We hauled two bales of cotton from the Zach

Gardner gin to Denison, Texas, for Miller and Green. We were paid five dollars a bale. I lived in Texas until the first of 1890, then I came to Pauls Valley, but this time I brought my family with me. I owned at that time four horses, seventeen head of milk cows, three fat hogs and a flock of chickens. On arriving at Pauls Valley, I found the town had been moved after the railroad came through. I rented some land from Sam Paul, and I leased a lot from him in Pauls Valley. I paid him twenty-five dollars a year for this lease. I built a one-room house on this lot, and moved in. I went to farming and my wife took care of the cows and chickens. Everybody let their cattle and hogs run out. My wife sold milk and butter. What she couldn't sell she gave away. The first year I raised two thousand bushel of corn and sold it for fifteen cents a bushel. Corn was piled up here in big log piles and many a morning I would have to go drive my cows off somebody's pile of corn. There was plenty of work; anybody could get a job. Sam Paul at that time wouldn't let anyone build a house on the east side of the railroad, but after his son Joe killed him, people went to building there. When the U. S. Court was established here I happened

to have a lease on four acres of land where they had picked for the Court house, so I swapped the lease to Calvin Grant for another lease and up went the Court house. I was one of the first jurors to sit on the first grand jury held in this Court house. That three week's session we found one hundred and eighty indictments. Judge Shackelford was the first Judge to sit on the bench at Pauls Valley. There were lots of killings in this part of the country. Charley Strickland killed West Harris, Bill Lewis killed Charley Strickland, John Walner, a U. S. deputy Marshal, killed Bill Lewis at Wynnewood, and Bob Walner killed John Walner. Bob was a nephew of John Walner. Joe Paul killed his father, Sam Paul, and Jamison McClue was found on the railroad track dead. The train had run over him, some people believed, but I had my own belief about it. I made the Cheyenne run and staked a place but never went to file on it. I live in Pauls Valley where I have lived since 1890.