

FREMY, BEN

INTERVIEW

#4347

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

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Field Worker's name Thad Smith Jr.This report made on (date) 6-9 19371. Name Ben Freney2. Post Office Address Alan3. Residence address (or location) 4 mi. SE of Alan4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 23 Year 18885. Place of birth Cocatox. In the Choctaw Nation.6. Name of Father Robert Freney Place of birth AlabamaOther information about father Buried in Oklahoma7. Name of Mother Sally Ellis Place of birth MississippiOther information about mother One-fourth ChoctawBuried in Oklahoma

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

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I was born in the Choctaw Nation, two miles west of Goodland. My father freighted his supplies from Paris, Texas.

There were a few white men there, but mostly Indians, who had been moved there from Mississippi.

There was a Methodist Church there and Mr. Stark was the preacher.

When I was five or six years old, my father sold out and moved to Boggy Depot, which is in the western part of the Choctaw Nation. I attended my first school there; it was a subscription school. The building was made of logs, covered with alab boards. Our desks were home-made and the seats were wide enough for four or five children. The teacher was an old maid but I don't remember her name.

Church was held every Sunday in the school house and Allen Wright was the preacher. He was a Presbyterian, and he preached in both English and Choctaw, as there were always a great many Choctaws attended who didn't understand English. In the summers big camp meetings would be held in the open, and nearly everyone in the surrounding country would attend. The meetings would sometimes last over a week.

The mail was carried to Boggy Depot on the stage.

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from points in Kansas and Texas.

Julius Wilson, a Choctaw Indian, owned a toll bridge across Boggy Creek, near Boggy Depot. I have seen as many as fifty wagons, loaded with apples, from Missouri, and Arkansas, cross the toll bridge in one day. Most of these wagons were bound for Texas. In Texas the apples and most of the time the wagon, and teams, were sold. The charge for crossing the toll bridge was twenty-five cents per wagon.

I have seen thousands of Texas Longhorns trail through Boggy Depot. The most of them were driven to Joplin, Missouri, where they were loaded and shipped to market. One herd of 17,000 head was driven through. I averaged seeing one herd, being driven through a week.

There wasn't very much farming done around Boggy Depot, but some cotton and corn was raised. Most of the farming was done with work steers. The cotton made about a bale to the acre, and was ginned at Boggy Depot with a horse-power gin. The cotton was carried in a basket, and dumped in the gin. Here it was pressed and baled with what was called a screw press. A team was hitched to the press, and was driven in a circle. This caused the press to screw down tighter. The cotton was sold for about four cents a pound.

The corn made about forty or fifty bushels to the acre, and nearly all that was sold was sold to immigrants for two dollars and fifty cents per bushel.

In those days, if a person was caught stealing he was lashed across the back with a piece of raw-hide. If he was caught the second time, which usually he wasn't, he was tied to a tree and shot full of holes.

Most of the Indians had spinning wheels and looms. In making what was then commonly known as jeans cloth, they first spun the warp on their spinning wheel. This warp was then put in the loom, the threads running perpendicularly. This warp was made of cotton. Wool was spun on the spinning wheel and tied at the bottom of the loom, and was woven back and forth, horizontally. This wool string was called the filler. As the cloth was woven, there was a roller on the bottom of the loom that the cloth was wound on to. Pants and shirts made of this jeans cloth, and would wear from two to four years. usually they were dyed with dye made from oak bark or black walnut hulls. Both made a brown dye, but the black walnut hulls made the darkest dye. Oak bark and black walnut hulls were both boiled in water to make the dye.

There were a few Cherokee Indians at Boggy Depot. They were a better shot with a bow and arrow than the Choctaws. They could shoot a squirrel out of a tree, standing fifty yards away.

There were lots of deer, wild turkey, prairie chickens, quail and lots of mule-footed wild hogs. The hogs lived on acorns and pecans, and made very good meat.

Dr. Dann and Dr. Lindsey were our doctors at Boggy Depot, and G. B. Hester and Joe Phillips each ran a general mercantile store. About 1888, I moved near Caddo.

Wilson Jones, a fullblood Choctaw Indian, was one of the biggest cow-men in the country. His brand was W. J., and he ran about eight thousand head of cattle. He also owned a store seventeen miles east of Caddo.

In the summers nearly everyone would get together and catch fish, and have big fish fries. There were plenty of fish in all of the streams.

When the Choctaws were allotted I took my place, four miles southeast of Alex, and I am still living on it.