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

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt

This report made on (date) December 11 1937

Lone Wolf, Kiowa County, Oklahoma

1. Name Jesse Milton Freeman
2. Post Office Address Hobart, Kiowa County, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 31 Year 1871
5. Place of birth Overton County, Tennessee

6. Name of Father Wm. L. Freeman Place of birth Virginia

Other information about father Confederate Soldier

7. Name of Mother Ruth Ready Freeman Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about mother Little memory of her as she  
died early

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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Ethel B. Tackitt,  
Investigator,  
December 11, 1937.

An Interview with Jesse Milton Freeman,  
Hobart, Oklahoma.

I was born in Overt n County, Tennessee, July 31,  
1871. My father, William L. Freeman, was a native of  
Virginia and served as a Confederate soldier through  
the Civil War.

My mother, Ruth Ready Freeman, was born in Tennessee.

My parents died when I was a child and I know but  
little of their people.

I lived in Arkansas when I was a child and when I  
was sixteen years old some friends of mine, a family named  
Powers, the father's name was William Felix Powers, were  
getting ready to move in to the Indian Territory and they  
had two wagons and teams, so I arranged with Mr. Powers  
to come along and drive one of the teams for him and in  
this way pay my transportation and board. I was an orphan  
and had no one to look to anyway and I wanted to go West.

Mr. Powers had a wife and two daughters. He started  
from Van Buren, Arkansas, traveling west in two covered  
wagons and after we got into the country which is now

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Oklahoma there were very few roads that were anything but wagon tracks between settlements which in turn were army posts, trading posts or cow towns.

There was much talk among the people about the opening for settlement of different parts of the Indian Reservations so we continued our journey west, crossing the thickly wooded districts, for there was a great deal more timber in the country then than there is at present.

We stopped at Cloud Chief which is now in Washita County. It was quite a good town with, I suppose, something like one thousand people ; it was a cow town as it was a gathering place for the cowboys and Indians and traders of that section. We were on the road twenty-four days.

Mr. Powers got a claim three miles south of Cloud Chief and farmed two years, then the family became dissatisfied with the western country and sold out and went back East.

There was no such place as the town of Cordell, the present county seat of Washita County, at that time.

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I got a job working for a man by the name of Bud Bills at \$15.00 a month; I did all kinds of work, sometimes on the farm or I would do anything that a boy could do.

Later on a store was put in where Cordell now stands and in the Spring of 1888, I took a team and wagon and with four other fellows with teams and wagons, began to haul cotton across the country to Duncan, which is now in Stephens County, as there was supposed to be a better market there. It took us twelve days to make the trip and we received five cents per pound for the cotton. But time did not count in the value of things then.

Bud Bills decided to put in a store at Cordell and I hauled most all of the lumber from Sugden, which is now in Jefferson County, near the Texas Line. That is across four counties at present, and was a long haul over unworked roads. Several wagons would go along together and we would help one another; when a team could not pull its load out of a mud hole or when we came to a creek, the wagons would be pulled across one at a time and the teams would be unhitched from the other wagons and hitched onto the wagon crossing

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and the drivers would push at the wheels and dig out the dirt with spades brought along for the purpose until all were safely across the creek. Some times it would take hours or even a day to make a bad crossing. No man ever left his fellow traveler stuck in the mud in those days.

Later, I came down into the Kiowa country and worked on a cow-ranch for the Crowell outfit, three and one-half miles south of the present town of Hobart on Big Elk Creek. There was no sign of a town at Hobart then and nothing in the county except a few cow-ranches and the Kiowa Indian encampments, and some Kiowa Missions, one of which is the one that is yet in service three and one half miles south of Hobart.

Since the opening of Kiowa county in 1901 I have lived in Hobart and am now in the grocery business there.