

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

GARDNER, BENJAMIN. - INTERVIEW.

1293

Field Worker's name John F. Daugherty

This report made on (date) May 4, 1937

1. Name Benjamin Gardner

2. Post Office Address Sulphur, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 23 Year 1877

5. Place of birth Wynnewood, Indian Territory.

6. Name of Father James Gardner Place of birth Indian Territory

Other information about father Stockman

7. Name of Mother Emily Lawson Gardner Place of birth Mississippi

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.

GARDNER, BENJAMIN - INTERVIEW.

1293

Daugherty, John F.-Interviewer.
Indian Pioneer History-S149.
May 4, 1937.

Interview with Benjamin Gardner,
Sulphur, Oklahoma.

My father, James W. Gardner, was born in Indian Territory, February 4, 1849. He was married to Emily Lawson who came from Mississippi with Smith Paul and worked for Uncle Zack Gardner in Pauls Valley until she and Father were married in 1870. There were six children in our family. I was born one-half mile south of Wynnewood, January 23, 1877.

My first school was a log house with split log benches and a block for the teacher's desk. My first teacher was Jennie Talbert who later was married to Sam Paul at Pauls Valley.

My second school was a double log house with a brush arbor between. This school house had windows.

I went to school in Wynnewood, then later I went to a military school in Fort Worth, Texas, and finished a business course at Gainesville and Ardmore.

I was a stockman for many years at Wynnewood and we got our mail at Pauls Valley. It came in on the stage from Denison, Texas, once a week. This stage line ran from Deni-

GARDNER, BENJAMIN - INTERVIEW.

1293

-2-

son, Texas, to Fort Washita, then to Tishomingo, then to Old Mill Creek, to Cherokee Town, to Erin Springs and on to Fort Cobb.

We went to Denison, Texas, for our groceries, for there was only one store at Pauls Valley and this was run by Miller and Green.

We had our corn ground at Uncle Zack Gardner's mill between Cherokee Town and Pauls Valley on the Washita River. This mill was built in the early '60s of logs set upon end. Uncle Zack had two stands to gin cotton on. The cotton was carried in a big basket and poured into the stands, then it was carried and put in the press by hand. The press was run up by a big wooden press screw. All the machinery was pulled by an overshot-wheel. The Washita River was dammed up with rocks and logs to get water to run the mill which ground corn and wheat and ginned cotton.

We drove our cattle to Red Fork before the railroad was built through Wynnewood and shipped them to Chicago. During the drouth in 1901 we had to drive our cattle down to Blue River for water and grass.

Father decided to build a frame house in the '80s. He hauled his lumber from Caddo with ox teams. This house had

GARDNER, BENJAMIN - INTERVIEW.

1293

-3-

a stone chimney and was one and one-half stories in height. We got water out of a spring.

In an election when Bill Guy was elected Governor of the Chickasaw Nation, defeating W. L. Byrd of Stonewall, each side accused the other of stealing the election. They almost had a Civil War and had to call in the Indian Militia to keep order. A friend of Governor Guy's, Senator Sam Paul of Pauls Valley, said they would seat Guy if they had to wade in blood to their knees.

I was married in 1896 and again in 1906. I have lived in Murray County since 1896. I came to Sulphur in 1912. I worked four years in the Sheriff's office as office Deputy and I started working for the F.E.R.A. in 1934 and have been doing office work for the Government ever since.