

MATTHEWS, WALTER HENRY.

INTERVIEW

10614

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

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Field Worker's name Mildred B. McFarland.

This report made on (date) April 20, 1938. 1938

1. Name Walter Henry Matthews.

2. Post Office Address Mulhall, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) General Delivery.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 26 Year 1862.

5. Place of birth Brockton, Massachusetts.

6. Name of Father George Henry Matthews. place of birth Mass.

7. Name of Mother Frances Dunbar Matthews. place of birth Maine.

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 3.

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Mildred B. McFarland,
Investigator,
April 20, 1938.

Interview With Walter Matthews,
Mulhall, Oklahoma.

I was born in Massachusetts but came to Oklahoma Territory from Florida.

On April 22, 1889, the little station of Alfred, on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, in the land opened for settlement on that day, saw trains loaded to overflowing with men and women moving slowly south. Horsemen, teams, wagons and most every kind of transportation and even people on foot followed in the wake of the train.

Charles W. Blakeslee, agent, and C. E. Minor, night operator at the boxcar station, watched the procession from the top of the water tank and about 12:30 o'clock they saw five horsemen coming from the northeast, who proved to be Jack Mulhall, then Assistant Livestock Agent for the Santa Fe; Sam Matthews, who had been holding a bunch of Texas longhorns at that point, Arch C. Elliott, who later became local postmaster; a young man called Dude Butler,

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from Springfield and me, just in from Florida. Soon settlement of the several bottom farms along Beaver Creek was completed and the town began to build.

Zack Mulhall filed on a quarter close to the Santa Fe depot and Sam Matthews filed on the quarter on which the south half of the town was later located.

It was a very hot day and our horses got well heated on the seven-mile ride. Soon the chuck wagon with tents, supplies and equipment of the different parties came and all dug trenches as a start for location, except Zack Mulhall, who had a headquarters dugout along the creek that the cowboys had built while holding cattle at this point.

There were local stockyards, as there had been much shipping of cattle into and from this point and there were a section house and a cottage for the "King Snipe" as the boss of the section was called.

Jim Bryant had a small cottage along the creek which was called Hotel Alfred, as his wife served meals to the travelers.

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John J and Ed L. Donahoe came in 1891 and started the grain and stock buying and later put up a cotton gin and began buying anything that a farmer had to sell. This was one of the best markets in Oklahoma for many years.

George H. Shall made bricks and built houses, one of which is still standing.

Henry Linn, the Anheuser -Busch local manager, was a frequent visitor and took lots in this town.

I am still using chairs I bought from, and that were made by, J. B. Baughman.

Rachel Hamlet was the only colored person who proved up on lots in town.

D. C. Drinnell built a two-story stone building and established a bank in 1892 that has kept up an existence to this day, and shows a deposit that is a credit to a town much larger. I am President of this bank.

I am getting to be an old man now, but feel my life has been well spent for my part in the Opening and settlement of the Land of Promise, Oklahoma.