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Form A-(S-149)

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

BLACKWELL, THOMAS C. INTERVIEW. 13250.

Field Worker's name Levina R. Beavers.

This report made on (date) March 17, 1938. 193

1. Name Thomas C. Blackwell.
2. Post Office Address Broken Bow, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) 6 miles north and 2 miles east.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 10 Year 1861.
5. Place of birth Vanzancell, Texas.

6. Name of Father Henry F. Blackwell. Place of birth Kentucky.

Other information about father He was farmer and miner.

7. Name of Mother Sarah Pen Blackwell. Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information about mother Housekeeper.

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 _____.

BLACKWELL, THOMAS C. INTERVIEW. 13250.

Levina R. Beavers,
Investigator,
March 17, 1938.

Interview With Thomas C. Blackwell,
Broken Bow, Oklahoma.

Thomas C. Blackwell was born at Vanzancell, Texas, in 1861. His father, Henry F. Blackwell, was born in Kentucky and went to Texas when he was two years old. His mother, Sarah Pen Blackwell, was born in Tennessee and she also went to Texas when about two years of age with her parents. Thomas C. Blackwell had but very little schooling. They did not have any free schools or grade schools. By the time he was of school age, his mother was a widow and she had to pay $1.50 a month if he attended school so he just went three months a year and sometimes just two months. He was seven when he first started to school. Sometimes his mother had little money and she had six children to go to school.

He was nine months old when his father left home for the Civil War and the father never returned home. When his father left, he reached down to see him, his farewell look. He was smoking a pipe and he dropped a spark of fire in the

home-made cradle. All the folks were seeing him leave and in the excitement the bedding in the cradle caught fire and burned young Thomas' hand pretty badly. He has a scar on the back of his hand yet. His father and another man started home on a furlough and when two hundred miles from home the father took sick with pneumonia in Shelby County, Texas. He asked this man who was with him to go and tell his wife to come to him, so the man went on, and traveled horseback. He traveled four days to get there. He and Thomas' mother hitched up the team to a wagon and started to go to the father, leaving all the children, except the oldest and the baby, who was Thomas C. Blackwell. It took them four days to get there and when they reached the place, a man met them and asked if that was Mrs. Blackwell. She said yes and he told her he had bad news to tell her, that he had just come back from burying her husband.

His father was captured during the War at Arkansas Post and sent a prisoner to Camp Chase, Ohio.

In 1889 when Thomas C. Blackwell was twenty-eight years old, he crossed Red River to Indian Territory at Colbert Ferry Crossing before there was a bridge. He married Miss

Rosa Slaughter in 1889. He lost his wife and in 1893 he married Miss Ella Clark at Wynnewood.

He has lived in Indian Territory among the Indians ever since 1889 and he always paid his permit to stay in the Territory. Lots of white people would not pay their permit fee. He came to McCurtain County in 1910 and located ten miles west of Hatfield, Arkansas. While living here he drove a medicine wagon for the Watkin products. He traveled for many years among the Indians, selling medicine, went to many Indians' homes and sometimes he had to stay all night with some of them. He never had any trouble with any of them, always getting along with them. One Indian, Peter L. McClure of Hochatown, owned him $2[illegible].00. Mrs. McClure would sell chickens or eggs and buy lots of his medicine, flavoring and such but McClure always said he did not have any money to pay him. Thomas got tired waiting for his pay. McClure had large cribs of corn and Blackwell told him he would take some corn for the debt at 50 cents a bushel. McClure agreed to let him have some corn so after corn was loaded on a wagon there was three dollars too much corn. McClure said to just go ahead and take it for he wanted that money to buy a pint of whiskey anyway.