

LAWSON, T. M.

INTERVIEW

#9115

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LAWHON, T. M.

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

9115

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

INTERVIEW

Field Worker's name Ruby Wolfesbergen

This report made on (date) November 1 1937

1. Name T. M. Lawhon

2. Post Office Address Sentinel, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 4 Year 1858

5. Place of birth Kentucky

6. Name of Father Martin Lawhon Place of birth Georgia

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother Lucy Littlefield Place of birth North Carolina

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 _____

Ruby Wolfenbarger
Investigator
November 1, 1937

Interview with
T. M. Lawhon
Sentinel, Oklahoma.

I was born in Kentucky March 4, 1858. I moved to Texas with my parents when just a small child. I grew up and married in Texas.

Most everyone around there wanted to come to the Indian Territory and go into the cattle business. Land was high and hard to get hold of in Texas at that time.

On April 1, 1902, I sold everything that I could and loaded my family into two wagons and one buggy. My wife had a little saddle pony that she didn't want to sell, so I let her drive it through; the buggy was more comfortable than riding in the wagons.

I drove about fifty head of cattle through. They were very poor when we left Texas; I didn't suppose that I would get there with any of them, but was very fortunate as I didn't lose any of them. They were very

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fat when we got to our new home.

We were not bothered in any way on our trip except one night. We thought that some men were going to steal our saddle horses. We hid in the high grass with our guas and hung a lantern on the wagon to keep them away. By this they knew that we were on the lookout for them.

We left Texas alone, but as we came along we met up with other people who were coming up here for the same reasons we were. At night we camped together, cooked our meals over the same camp fire, washed our dishes in the creek and then would sit around the campfire and tell about our old homes and of our past experiences. We made many new friends on this trip that we have kept in touch with through all these years. Some of them came on and settled in this part of the country.

Late one evening a cloud came up and we were forced to make camp. We drove into some trees as we thought that it would soon pass over, but it proved to

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be a regular flood. We had to get the wagons and the women and children up on a high hill for safety. We had to camp there for about one week on account of high water.

On June 1, two months after we left our old home, we landed in Cloud Chief. I kept my stock in a pasture until I could get located. I located five miles east and one mile north of Rocky. I bought another man's rights, which cost me several hundred dollars. I didn't get as much land as I had planned or wanted as most of the land had already been taken up.

Our first home was a dugout. This was very embarrassing to my children as they had always had a nice home to entertain their friends in. They soon forgot their old home and made new friends out here.

I put up a windmill; had to go to Cotebo to get the nails and lumber. We also hauled our groceries from there. We dug a well and had very good water; built a big barn; put out an orchard of berries, apples, peaches, cherries and plums. We went to the

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Washita River and cut wood to burn; also went there to fish as there were lots of fish in the river.

My principal crop was cotton. I planted some corn but didn't make very much. I planted every third furrow with kafir corn and maize. I had to sell all my cows and horses except just enough for our farm use because water and feed got scarce.

My children went to school in a dugout, there were also a grocery store and post office in a dugout near our home.

About the first big celebration that we had was when our first governor was elected. Everyone went wild; we had a big picnic and dance in our community.

Our social organizations were the churches. Ministers would come from all over the state and debate. This proved to be very dangerous; it broke up the churches and made lots of enemies among the people.

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The young folks spent most of their time in hunting, fishing and playing ball.

People were very kind in the early days. They were more sociable than they are now; they would go out of the way to help a friend or neighbor.

As I look back over the years gone by, I wonder how we ever made such a dangerous trip without some kind of an accident. We had to make our own roads, hunt the bridges and cross the country where there were lots of Indians and so-called bad men.