
WATSON, B. W.

INTERVIEW

10106

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INTERVIEW

Form A-(S-149)

#101261

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson

This report made on (date) February 23, 1938 1938

Name B. W. Watson

Post Office Address Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

Residence address (or location) _____

DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 26 Year 1865

Place of birth Mississippi

Name of Father George Watson Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about father _____

Name of Mother Sarah Jane Munn Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and history 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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Maurice R. Anderson.
Investigator,
February 23, 1938.

An Interview with B.W. Watson.
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

I was born in 1865, in Mississippi and came to the Indian Territory from Texas in the fall of 1890 and settled near Pauls Valley. I rented a farm from Zach Gardner, who owned the only gin and grist mill in this part of the country at the time. I was like most of the men coming to the Indian Territory in the early days with a family to support and not much money. I owned one cow and a few chickens when I settled here; farmers had a very hard time in settling up this country. When I came here there were not very many people living here; there were no roads to speak of and only one log school-house and it was used for a church. It was a subscription school and cost one dollar a month for each child sent and this made it very hard for some of us farmers who didn't have much money. The first winter I settled here my family lived off of corn meal bread and rabbits. Of course, we had plenty of milk and butter and the few chickens I brought with us helped. There were lots of turkeys then and some deer and the woods were full

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of quail and squirrels. Zach Gardner, the man I rented land from, furnished me in corn until I made a crop.

The fall I came here the fields were full of corn but they didn't make much that year. Mr. Gardner told me the boll worms had cleaned the cotton. The first crop I made, I raised about three thousand bushels of corn. Corn was cheap, only worth fifteen cents a bushel. I sold corn to Mr. Byers, who was a large cattle owner then and he had a feeding pen on the river not far from where I lived where he fed out cattle every winter. The country was full of cattle and though there were no fences the cattle never got our crops as the cattle owners had cow-hands to herd them.

There was no court at Pauls Valley when I first came, court being held at Ardmore. It was in 1895, when they began holding court at Pauls Valley and at that time, too, Amos Waite built a school. They always had school from six to nine months each year. Before 1895, school was held about three months each year. A church-house was then built at Pauls Valley. The town of Pauls Valley didn't do much build-

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ing until after 1900, although in the early days it was a main trading point, by 1900 Wynnewood was building into a nice town. And it looked for awhile like it was going to beat Pauls Valley for the county seat. That was the biggest election I have ever seen. At the time the Washita River overflowed and Pauls Valley had plenty of water over town. People rode around town in boats and instead of hauling people to vote in automobiles they hauled them to the polls in boats. I moved to Gainesville, Texas, in 1901. I now live with my daughter in Pauls Valley.

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Biography of Bob Watson (Negro)

Ardmore, Oklahoma

Born March 1870 in Texas

Bob Watson came to Ardmore with his family in 1874. For several months they were camped in a covered wagon just west of the "700" Ranch, near some large cottonwood trees. Later the family moved into a house near the Ardmore compress. Part of this house is still standing.

At this time the "700" Ranch house consisted of one large room and a small kitchen with a hallway between. The whole structure was built of logs. The kitchen is still standing. Just west of the house was a large well which afforded an abundant supply of water. This well was filled up a few years ago because the water was thought to be impure. Southeast of the house near two large trees at the head of a ravine was a large spring which afforded water for all the stock which was kept about the place. The corral and horse pasture were located northeast of the house. The ranch is said to have obtained its name from the fact that at one time there were seven hundred head of cattle kept on it, although when Watson came to the ranch Alva Roff had cattle from Red River on the south to Caddo Creek on the north. The ranch was the scene of many shooting episodes. Watson recalls on three different occasions when men were shot down at the ranch. It was nothing