

WATKINS, BERT

INTERVIEW

#12209

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

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12209.

Field Worker's name Charles H. Holt.

This report made on (date) November 16, 1937. 1937

1. Name Bert Watkins.

2. Post Office Address Wominy, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1887.

5. Place of birth Missouri.

6. Name of Father John Watkins. Place of birth Kentucky.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Mary Scott. Place of birth Indiana.

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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Charles H. Holt,
Investigator,
November 16, 1937.

an. Interview with Bert Watkins,
Hominy, Oklahoma.

Bert Watkins was born in Missouri, in 1883, and his parents moved the next year to a place near Elgin, Kansas, on a farm and lived there for two years and, in 1887, moved into the Osage Nation just south of the Kansas line on a farm with practically all raw land, but the prairie land produced very good wheat in the raw stage, and quite a bit of wheat was raised. Some of the bottom land was planted to corn and fed back to hogs. Farm implements consisted of small turning plows and Georgia stocks and cultivators of the old pin-trip style.

There was no school at the time nearer than Elgin, so the children of that neighborhood went to Elgin to school at first, but the second year a school was built of sod and logs in the neighborhood.

At that time all cattle that were shipped in for grazing in the Osage Nation were unloaded at Elgin and driven down into the Osage Nation over a trail or road that led by the Watkins' farm and Bert Watkins recalls the time when more than a thousand longhorn steers stampeded near

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their farm house. The cattle stampeded in every direction, tearing down fences as they went and nine of them were killed when they ran over a big bluff, and it took the cowboys two or three days to round all of the cattle up.

They did not buy flour, but took wheat they raised and had it ground or bolted. The nearest mill was at Bartlesville, operated by Jake Bartles.

The Watkins family moved from the northern part of the Osage Nation to a place four miles north of Cushing and homesteaded. This was in the Sac and Fox country. The Sac and Fox Indians were friendly and some of them farmed at that time. Mr. Watkins could not agree with all of their customs. He disliked ^{one in} particular; this was the annual dog feast. It was said their choice dish at the feast was puppy dog tail soup.

On the homestead north of Cushing the Watkins family built a two room sod house which was used as a dwelling for several years, then a log house was built. There was no school near at first but a log and sod building was built and served for both school and church.

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The first store building in Cushing was built of sod and Kingsberry and McGuffey operated a grocery store in it.

A man named Dr. Scott was the first representative elected from Payne County.

Bert Watkins' father died about 1901 at Cushing and Bert moved to Hominy in 1902, where he now resides.