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Douglas H. Johnson

Field Worker, John F. Daugherty,
July 17, 1937.

Interview with O. D. White,
Wynnewood, Okla.
Route 3.
Born October 21, 1867,
Mobile, Alabama.
Parents James E. White, Oklahoma.
Mattie Free White.

My father was James E. White, born July 7, 1836, in Lawrence County, Alabama.

Mother was Mattie Free White, born July 11, 1838, (place unknown).

Father was a farmer. There were eight children in our family. I was born October 21, 1867, in Mobile, Alabama. I came to the Territory in 1884 from San Antonio, Texas. I settled at old Kemp, near the present site of Durant in the Choctaw Nation, with my parents. We came in two wagons. It took about eight weeks to make the trip.

We moved in a pole house, daubed with hay and clay. It had a cat chimney which was our stove. Mother cooked in a skillet and lid. Mother knit socks for the firm of Fry Brothers at Durant. The stage line from Denison to Caddo came past our house. It was fun to watch the stage go by. The horses were always in a gallop and the stage

rocked and lunged from side to side as they sped on. We had old clapboard doors hung in wooden socket hinges. We had to keep these greased to keep the door from creaking loudly as it was opened or shut. The windows were just shutters. When we saw someone approaching whom we suspected as being a person whom we didn't care to meet, we went into the house and closed the shutters and doors, and didn't appear until that person had departed. We drank water out of a creek. We drove down there, scraped the green scum away, dipped up a barrel of water and drove our horses into the hole to stir it up. When we got all the fish we wanted. The next day when we went after our water the scum would be cleared away and the water was clear. In a few days it would be covered again and we would have to stir it again.

People were honest in those days. We never had to lock our houses, and everybody carried what money they had as there were no banks.

I went to school near Durant in an old log house where goats slept at night. The fleas were so numerous

we could hardly stay in there. It was difficult to concentrate on our lessons with the fleas biting us.

We had to keep our feet upon the benches. If we put them on the floor we were covered with fleas in a short time.

I rode after cattle for the rails for several years. We were driving a bunch of six hundred head into Texas once and we had a terrible time getting them to cross Red River at Ferguson's Ferry. We were there two days. We had to rope them one at a time and swim across with them. A bootlegger came by our camp and some of the boys got so drunk we had to wait for them to get sober before we could move on. I always carried a compass to direct me. On one trip I forgot my compass and got lost in Blue Creek Bottom. When I started the wind was blowing from the south and it changed to the north. The sky was covered with clouds and I didn't know the wind had changed. When I found out where I was, I had gone to Brown's water mill north of Tishomingo just exactly opposite from where I had started.

We ginned our cotton at Kemp. They had a gin with a wooden press drawn by a mule. After the I and G. M. railroad was built through Kemp they used Hog Engines fed

with wood. It was a very small engine with a tender filled with wood. The wood was ricked along the right-of-way and the water was kept in barrels near the truck. It was hauled from creeks by teams and put in the barrels.

Bally Jones had a large hay pasture in which he kept a bunch of hogs. He also had a cellar in which he kept his wine. One night a bunch of boys wanted some of this wine, but Bally wouldn't sell it. They decided to steal it. Some of them went in and talked to Bally while the others got the wine out of his cellar. The next morning his hogs were reeling and lying stretched out as if dead. He hurried to a neighbor's to have him come and see what was the matter with his hogs. Upon investigation they found that the boys had more wine than they wanted and they poured it into the hog troughs and the hogs got drunk.

I shall never forget a camp meeting which I attended. The preacher was getting toward the close of his sermon and everybody was listening intently when Frank Colbert, who was standing outside near an old stump, began to jump around and yell. The minister stopped his sermon and everybody centered their gaze upon Frank. He was

shouting and jumping. All supposed he had gotten religion and was very happy about it. After a time he rather ceased his yelling and jumping and the preacher said "Did you get through all right Brother Colbert?" He replied "I got through the thickest of them, but they're giving me hell yet." He had gotten into a nest of yellow jackets. This broke up the meeting for that day and everybody left the arbor laughing about Brother Colbert's religion.

I knew one man in those days who traded his wife to his brother for fifty head of horses.

I worked at the Bloomfield Academy for two years when it was located near Old Kemp. I freighted their supplies from Denison, broke horses for the girls to ride, took care of the cattle and hogs belonging to the academy, and washed dishes part of the time. Douglas H. Johnson was the superintendent at that time. He and the principal went to Denison every Saturday. One Saturday after they had gone the girls stacked the benches in the auditorium and had a big dance. When the teachers returned they started to whip the leaders, but these girls ran off. It was cold and snow was on the ground. I felt sorry for them, so I hitched up a team and took them home.

I wanted to be a squatter in 1892 when the Cheyenne country was to be opened. I started and when I got to Cloud Chief a puff of wind blew my wagon over. There was not a cloud in sight, but this wind had force enough to upset the wagon and break the bows. My food was filled with fine sand. I was thoroughly disgusted at this and turned back to the Choctaw Nation.

When butchering time came in the fall eight or ten families would go into the creek or river bottoms, set up a camp, round up wild hogs with their dogs, and butcher all the hogs everybody wanted for the winter.

The Indians thought that feeding corn to horses made them pace. When they saw a pacing horse he was called a "Tomfuller" horse. The old Indian graves were covered with little log houses, covered with clapboards. Many a night I have seen lights in an Indian graveyard near my place near Wapanucka. I judged it to be people excavating these graves for valuable articles which were buried with the Indian.

When I was thirty-six years old I married Rosie Kinney at Wapanucka. That was in 1904. We have eight children. I have lived in Murray County continuously since 1916.