

WHITSON, JOHN FRANCIS

INTERVIEW

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#7183

INDEX CARDS:

Fort Smith
Choctaw Nation

WHITSON, JOHN FRANCIS. INTERVIEW BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Margaret McGuire.

This report made on (date) August 13, 1937

1. Name John Francis Whitson ✓

2. Post Office Address Fame, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) One mile south of Fame.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 27 Year 1856.

5. Place of birth Cherokee County, Alabama.

6. Name of Father Whitson Place of birth Alabama

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Whitson Place of birth Alabama

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 4.

Margaret McGuire,
Interviewer.

Life Story Given by John Francis Whitson,
of Fame, Oklahoma.

I was born in Cherokee County, Alabama, in 1852. I moved to Tennessee in 1867, then I moved to Ft. Smith, Arkansas, in 1876. I lived there until 1887 when I married Miss Mathis, November 18. We lived together three years, then she died. I then moved to Stigler, Oklahoma, and leased a piece of land, and farmed for about six years. There I married Mrs. Ellen Allen in 1894, and we moved over near the Old Creek Court House, near Vivian. We lived there for about two years, then in 1907, we had Statehood, and I was inspector of the Constitution as I had lived in Oklahoma for a number of years.

I came to this country in covered wagons, other families coming with us. We brought what little furniture we thought we could make out with. Our first home was a tent with the top full of holes. Every time it would rain we would get wet. We next lived in a double log house, but it was almost ready to fall down. After Oklahoma became a State I moved to the State of Washington, but in three years I came back to Oklahoma, and I have been here since that time.

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When I came to Oklahoma there were no towns anywhere around here, and there were not more than ten people in Eufaula. I rented land from Caurrial McIntosh when I came to this country.

There was a man who came into our settlement with a small team of oxen which were just calves, and he cultivated about one hundred acres of land. Most people thought he had money hidden away, so one night a strange man came to his home, went in and demanded his money. This man told the stranger that all the money he had was in an old bag or grip which was setting on a shelf. The farmer took the bag down pretending to ^{get} the money out of it but instead he took out a pistol. He shot the intruder and the man ran about one hundred yards from the house and died. Then later the man who did the shooting went down to the same place and shot himself. I call that "Death Valley".

We did not have much fighting or killing then as ~~most~~ all the people got along well together. There were a few of us white people who got together and decided to build a school house, so we could send our children to school. We could also use the place to have church and Sunday School. We hewed the logs out with axes to put

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up the building. I made the boards to cover it out of a big oak tree, with a free that my ancestors brought from England, years ago when America was first being settled. It was brought over on the Mayflower.

There were three brothers by the name of Whitson who all came over on the Mayflower, and brought this free with them. I am the last one of the generation to own it, and it is more than two hundred years old. I also have a pair of scissors that are over two hundred years old. These scissors came from England, and have been handed down through six or seven generations. They belonged to my first wife.

About one-half mile east of Vivian there is an old tree where they used to whip the Indians in order to punish them for the wrongs they did. This old tree is still standing. The school house that was built near Fame was called Weldon Chapel. It was called Weldon because Mr. Weldon donated the land on which to build it. Years later this school was moved over to Fame and is now a good school.

I made the Run in 1891, the Sac and Fox, but I had been sick for several days and I didn't get any land.

I have farmed all my life, and I have hunted a lot of game. I have killed deer, bear, and wild turkey.

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Where my house stands now was all in timber then.

When we were living in our old log house a terrible hail storm came and beat the roof off of the house. It killed some of our stock and killed all our chickens and our crops were a total loss. It was too late to plant more so we had a very hard winter. We had to live mostly on wild game. I have been through some very hard times but I would not trade Oklahoma for any other state.