

WHITMIRE, JONATHAN.

INTERVIEW

13110

422

ETHNOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian Pioneer History Project

WHITMIRE, JONATHAN.

INTERVIEW.

13110.

Field Worker's name Gus Hummingbird.

This report made on (date) February 25, 1938

1. Name Jonathan Whitmire.

2. Post Office Address Westville, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

5. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

6. Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

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 6

WHITMIRE, JONATHAN.

INTERVIEW.

13110.

Gus Hummingbird.  
Investigator,  
February 25, 1938.

An Interview with Johnson Whitmire.  
Westville, Oklahoma.

Jonathsn (Jack) Whitmire, a three-quarter blood Cherokee, was born in Goingsnake District, Cherokee Nation, September 27, 1890. He was the son of Walter Whitmire, an early day leader of the Cherokee people and a politician. His mother was Ella Still, a full blood Cherokee who also came from a well known family.

The family of the Whitmires were well known in the early days. They were Old Settlers in this country and were well-to-do people. Only two of the Whitmires came and settled in the Goingsnake District; this was George and Johnson who came to this country in 1829. The grandfather of Jack settled on Peavine Creek about five miles north of the present town of Stilwell, now the county seat of Adair County.

Soon after the coming of Johnson Whitmire he married a lady by the name of Holt who was a part Cherokee and to this union there were two children born, Johnson and Charley, who are still living. In later years, or after the death of his wife, he married one Ella Still, a full blood Cherokee,

WHITMIRE, JONATHAN.

INTERVIEW.

13110.

-2-

and to this union there were three children born, namely: Walter, Willie, and Nellie.

The other Whitmire, George, settled on Barren Fork Creek on the farm now called the Old Getty Whitmire place. In earlier times this was the Whitmire Plantation on Barren Fork. The one on Peavine was called Whitmire Plantation <sup>were</sup> on Peavine Creek. The Whitmires/all well-to-do. They owned slaves, therefore they had good reason to go with the South in the Civil War.

#### Early Life.

The father of Jack claimed a large farm on Barren Fork Creek known as the old Wright place and here he lived for a long time until he traded for a place on the prairie west of what is now Westville, Oklahoma. This farm consisted of about six hundred acres, a large farm in the early days. The family raised everything that they needed because there was not much of a market at that time but corn, oats and wheat were the principal crops.

Not much machinery was found in the Cherokee Nation. Wash <sup>first</sup> Lee was the/person that bought a thresher in this part of the

WHITMIRE, JONATHAN.

INTERVIEW.

13110.

-3-

country. There was no market in the Cherokee Nation for wheat and other small grain; most of the wheat was ground into flour and this, in turn, was used to pay for the labor on the farm. Most of the hired labor on this farm was paid this way. The Whitmires owned plenty <sup>of</sup> stock.

#### Early School.

The earliest school in this community that Jonathan Whitmire knows anything about was the Green School, located about a mile northeast of the village of Addielee, Oklahoma. This place was first established as a Presbyterian Church about 1877 and Reverend Schaub was the first pastor or the Missionary that was stationed in this church. Later he was transferred to the present Dwight Mission in Sequoyah County.

George Smith was the early day teacher at this old school. He was appointed by the Cherokee Nation, all teachers at that time being appointed by the Board of Education. This board was appointed by the chief or the Council. Later this old mission was moved north about a mile and called the Greenville church

WHITMIRE, JONATHAN.

INTERVIEW.

13110.

-4-

and the Baptist people had control at that time.

#### Civil War.

At the outbreak of the Civil War the Whitmires were living on Peavine Creek on the plantation. Representatives from both North and South would come to this plantation trying to get the Father to favor their part of the country. The North offered him command of an Indian Company if he would go with them. But he had a large bunch of slaves at the time and had several thousand dollars invested in those slaves. So, after close consideration he went South and all of his slaves went with him.

The Cherokees that lived in this part of the Goingsnake District called a meeting at Old Big Shed, an old church on the Peavine Creek. At this meeting they could not agree which way they should go so they left it up to each man to go as he pleased. They said that this was not their war, but some of them were forced to favor the South on account of the large amount of money that they had invested in slaves. Only two families went with the South in this community, that was Johnson

WHITMIRE, JONATHAN.

INTERVIEW.

13110.

-5-

Whitmire and George Crittenden who were both Old Settlers.

Politics.

After the Civil War there were two political parties in the Cherokee Nation, the National and the Downing. Before the war these parties had been known as the Ross and the Ridge. The Whitmires were staunch supporters of the Downing Party. Walter Whitmire was elected to the National Council two terms and was a member of the council when the great railroad question came up. He did not favor this bill.

Jonathan does not remember much about the changes that took place in court house sites before statehood or in the early seventies. What he knows was told to him by his father. The Goingsnake Court House was moved three times. It was at first located on England Creek about ten miles northwest of Stilwell on the farm that White Whitmire filed on at allotment. This may be a better location to name-it was located on Barran Fork Creek that is about a mile south of the old George Whitmire plantation. It was at this place that Tuxie

WHITMIRE, JONATHAN.

INTERVIEW.

13110

-6-

Leach was hung for killing the daughter of Dave Hitcher, an early day prosecutor. Several years afterwards they moved the location about a mile west of the old plantation and was at this place that Luke Proctor had his fight in April, 1873. After this fight the court house was again moved to Peacheater Creek about seven miles west of the town of Westville and there it remained until statehood.

After the moving to the Peacheater Creek, those prisoners that were convicted to hang were brought to the farm of Walter Whitmire and hung. They erected the gallows there and several were hung during the life of Walter. A big pine tree was planted to mark the spot where the gallows stood and this tree stands today. The old post oak tree that stood near this spot where they whipped persons that did petty larceny was cut down recently.