

WILKEY, JOHN

INTERVIEW .

4983

48

INDEX CARDS:

Civil War

Civil War Prisoner

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

Field Worker's name R. H. Boatman

Report made on (date) July 20, 1937

Name John Wilkey

Post Office Address Wurtzell, Oklahoma

Residence address (or location) 104 Gross Venture

DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 17 Year 1845

Place of birth Missouri

Name of Father Dave Wilkey Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Mother Susan Wilkey Place of birth Arkansas

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

is or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and  
 y of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects  
 questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to  
 form. Number of sheets attached \_\_\_\_\_

WILKEY, JOHN

INTERVIEW

4983

Interview with Mr. John Wilkey  
Murrell, Oklahoma.

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I was born in the state of Missouri, February 17, 1845, and as a boy I grew up on a farm, as my father was a farmer. We didn't farm on a big scale like they do today. From twenty to thirty acres was a pretty good sized crop for a family in those days.

We would raise some cotton from which we made our clothes by hand; some corn and generally a small patch of sugar cane to make a barrel of sorghum molasses. We always had plenty of meat and lard, as everybody had plenty of hogs, and wild game was plentiful. There were deer, turkeys, bears, buffalo and all kind of small game.

Farm products were cheap and there were not many markets, for those people then were not trying to make money. Everyone was happy and contented and a man's word was his bond. Such things as mortgages were not known. If a man needed to borrow some money, he just went over to his neighbors and got it and when the borrower got his money, he brought it back to his neighbor. So was life on the farm in those days.

WILKEY, JOHN

INTERVIEW

4983

2

at the age of sixteen, I enlisted with the Illinois Cavalry of the Northern Army as a drummer boy. That was in 1861, in the beginning of the war between the North and the South. As the first encounters began it would make a fellow wish he had stayed at home and minded his own business.

We fought several hard battles all along from Texas to Arkansas. I was seriously wounded at Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and was captured and taken prisoner of war and was taken to Texas and placed in a stockade with some four hundred others.

Well; all we could do was to take it.

After a long time, some of us boys bribed a guard. We gave him 50.00 and we broke prison. There were two hundred and two of us who got away and we then split up into small bunches of four, five and six to the bunch. There were five in my bunch; only one man, the rest were boys sixteen to twenty years old.

We started out to our company, got lost, had nothing to eat and we lived three days on wild onions, when we then

WILKEY, JOHN

INTERVIEW

4983

came up on a bunch of tame geese. So we killed some of the geese and went to a creek and there we stopped and began roasting these geese. While they were roasting in the ashes we heard the hounds coming and we ran off out in the brush and here they came and with them were three men. So as they rode up the men pit us talked out and began cursing them.

I never heard anyone take such a cursing in my life as he gave them but without me and he were lined up and started back to the side and our captors kept trying to get us to tell how we got it and the man with us kept cursing our captors.

So we were halted and they threatened to cut off that man's neck but he wouldn't tell how we got it. So they drew him up to a limb and hanged him and then I reckon they thought him dead so they let him down and after he gave a few gasps for breath he began cursing them again but wouldn't tell them anything. So they stretched him up again to the same limb, until they felt sure that he was dead and let him down a second and after about ten to fifteen minutes, he gave a few

WILKEY, JOHN

INTERVIEW

4983

4

gasps, got up on his feet and began cursing them again and then one of their outfit said, "There's the bravest men of all the army and he deserves to live."

We were marched on and again placed in prison. Altogether, I was in prison eleven months and twenty days and all the time I was there all in the world I had to eat was one half pint of real corn meal and one slice of bacon about two inches square and we had that only once a day. We had that every morning at nine o'clock and all the salt we had was charcoal burned from a pine knot.

It was while I was in prison the last time that Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.

So we escaped again and we got organized and got with our company in Louisiana.

In Louisiana, the Southern Army had 12,000 of our men in a stockade so we and the together defeated the Southern men, tore down that stockade and burned it. I was never captured or wounded again. I was honorably discharged at Springfield, Illinois, on August 31, 1865.

So I married after the close of the war, and began farm

WILLEY, JOHN

INTERVIEW

4983

5

ing. I have farmed all my life and have been a successful farmer and in 1900 I came from Illinois to Indian Territory and began farming and stock raising for eleven years. In 1912 I moved to Marcel and we lived there since, and expect to live here for the rest of my life. I am thankful that I can by some means be able to care for myself even at the age of 92.