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WINGO, WILLIAM W. INTERVIEW.  
BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Form A-(S-149)

311

6755.

Field Worker's name Bradley Bolinger.

This report made on (date) July 19, 1937. 1937

1. Name William W. Wingo.

2. Post Office Address Wilburton Oklahoma, General Delivery.

3. Residence address (or location) Out in rural settlement, near Center Point.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 22 Year 1872.

5. Place of birth Fort Smith, Arkansas.

6. Name of Father Willis P. Wingo. Place of birth Mississippi.

Other information about father Died at the age of seventy-three.  
buried in the Hartshorne Cemetery.

7. Name of Mother Caroline Winters Wingo. Place of birth Mississippi.

Other information about mother Died at age of fifty-five, buried in  
Van Buren, Arkansas, Cemetery.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 4.

WINGO, WILLIAM W.

INTERVIEW.

6756.

312

Bradley Bolinger,  
Interviewer.

An Interview With William W. Wingo,  
A retired stock raiser and farmer.

EARLY DAY WHITE SETTLER.

My father and mother died, and were buried in the State of Arkansas, when I was a great big boy, along in the year of 1888. I then settled in what was just a little settlement named Hartshorne. My brother lived there, and his name was Sam Wingo; he was a United States Marshal then. He also got to be company marshal for the new Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Railroad that came through this nation along in 1890.

One of the first coal mines that was opened around Hartshorne was called shaft No.1 and it was being started in that year. There were not more than two or three houses in Hartshorne at this time. After coal was found there, there were a lot of white settlers who moved to this place, and just built tents, to work in the new mine.

None of the Choctaw Indians ever came or wanted work in this coal mine as they knew nothing about mining and never did ask for work.

Along about that time there were a lot of Choctaws who were divided in their agreement on the land allotment.

Many of the tribe were against this, and did not want the land allotted just so much to each Indian citizen, and there was a lot of trouble in and around Gaines County over this. Lots of fighting and killing took place, but this was finally quieted down and the whole tribe accepted the allotment.

The Choctaw tribe was a peaceful tribe of Indians, and there never was a great deal of trouble throughout this whole tribe. The Choctaws were all pretty honest; there was very little stealing in the way of hogs and cattle in those days by the Choctaws. The Choctaws did not want a jail or a prison. When they tried one in their Indian court he was immediately taken out in the yard and given a whipping and turned loose to go back home. The Choctaws in those days did very little farming and their wives did all this work themselves. They only raised a little patch of corn for their bread and Tom-Fuller. It was the duty of the husband to go out hunting and furnish the meat and lard for the family. The country at that time was full of wild game.

J. J. McAlester operated a trading post where the town of North McAlester is now located. He was the first

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man to ever build a barb wire fence anywhere in the country then.

When the white settlers came to the Indian country and got their permits to live here they were only allowed ten head of cattle. Some of the white settlers who were raising cattle to sell and trade managed to have their nearest Indian neighbors let them use their names in order that they could raise all the stock that they wanted.

The Choctaws would gather in great numbers then and have what they called the Indian cry. That is when they mourned the dead members of their families. They would bring enough food to last them several days and cook, eat, and sleep out in the open. There would be a Choctaw minister and sometimes several of them, and they would hold church and then the women would cook something to eat. They would go to the graves and wail and cry for sometimes an hour at a time. It was customary with the Choctaw tribe that no Indian man or woman who had lost their mates through death would even think of selecting another mate until he or she had attended the grave of the buried mate and had the Indian cry over him or her.

When the Choctaw decided to marry he would select one of the Choctaw women with whom he wanted to live. He then would go to her father and they would talk over the union. Then he would go to the Indian preacher, and have him say the wedding ceremony. It was not necessary for a member of the tribe to get a marriage license. The Indian judge would make out the records in the Choctaw language for the Choctaw court records, but I do not remember as to whether the couple were charged anything for this or not, but I do not think they were.

In those days when a white man was marrying an Indian woman, after he had had the Indian marriage performed he immediately applied to the Government Indian department for citizenship. This would cost around one hundred dollars, and would entitle the white husband and all of his children to be allotted their share of land as Indian citizens.