

WITTEN, THOMAS FRANKLIN.

INTERVIEW

#8127

432

Field Worker's name Ethel E. Palmer

This report made on (date) July 30, 1937

1. Name Thomas Franklin Witten

2. Post Office Address Putnam, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Rural Route

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 19 Year 1880

5. Place of birth Jack County, Texas

6. Name of Father Issac James Witten Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father Mr. Witten isn't sure about place of birth.

7. Name of Mother Nannie Witten Place of birth Arkansas, but isn't sure.

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 3.

Interview with Thomas Franklin Witten
Putnam, Oklahoma

Field Worker = Ethel E. Palmer
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
July 30, 1937

I came from Wise County, Texas, to the Chickasaw Nation, on December 25, 1889. We located twenty-five miles west of Ardmore, between Hewitt and Hilder.

We moved in a covered wagon and drove horses; we leased our place from a white man, but he had leased from an Indian. We first lived in a tent but one day a storm blew the tent away and the neighbors came in and helped build us a log house daubed in red mud and we had a chimney built to it. We had a cupboard and table made from the native lumber. My father split rails and fenced the land that we were living on.

I went to school at Iron Top in a log building and all we had to sit on was logs. We studied spelling and reading (combined), arithmetic and geography.

Our trading post and post-office was a little Indian town named Healdton and Ardmore was our closest railroad town. It was twenty-five miles from where I lived. We never had taxes to pay as we do now. We

paid a \$5.00 permit each year to live on this land.

We raised corn and cotton and when I first came to that country we always "topped" our corn every year.

Cotton sold at from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 cents a pound. We farmed with a double shovel, Georgia stock and a walking cultivator.

Everyone in that neighborhood lived on Indian leases which they would of course lease in different ways, some leased land for breaking out sod, others to build improvements.

There was an old hunting ground east of Ardmore. A ferry crossed Red River close by Burlington. This ferry was just a large platform which was made from native lumber and was pulled across the river with a cable.

The Arbuckle Trail came through Burlington through the Arbuckle Mountains, on through Hennepin and on across Wild Horse Creek to Elk City.

I was in the drawing at Lawton, but my number was far larger than the last number drawn.