

WOLFENBARGER, JAMES H.

INTERVIEW

#8645

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

Field Worker's name Ruby WolfenbargerThis report made on (date) September 24, 19371. Name James H. Wolfenbarger2. Post Office Address Sentinel, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) Sentinel4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 9 Year 18675. Place of birth Lee County, Virginia6. Name of Father John G. Wolfenbarger Place of birth VirginiaOther information about father Farmer7. Name of Mother Theresa Kelley Place of birth TennesseeOther information about mother Housewife

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 5.

WOLFENBARGER, JAMES H. INTERVIEW. #8645

Interview with James H. Wolfenbarger
Sentinal, Oklahoma
Interviewer - Ruby Wolfenbarger
September 24, 1937

I was born in Lee County, Virginia, October 9, 1867. I moved to Texas with my parents when I was about ten years of age. In 1889 I came to the Indian Territory in a covered wagon with another man. We were about five days and nights on the road. We went to Purcell and waited for the opening of the land.

The morning of the opening we started out in our wagon and got to where Norman is now located.

We passed three fast race horses that were down. They had been driven too hard. People were just running wild. Some played fair while others didn't. Some men had two or three wagons loaded with groceries, clothing, and hardware. They planned to stop at the first good location and start little towns.

My friend picked out a claim where the city of Choctaw is now located. I helped him stake out

his land and put up a tent. We stayed there two days and nights, then he went back to Texas after his family and I went into Oklahoma City.

Oklahoma City was a real city just two days after the opening. There were white tents and wagons just as far as your eyes could see.

People were happy and carefree. They were singing as they went about their work. I worked at odd jobs there for about three months.

When the western part of the state was opened, in 1903, I came to what is now Washita County and filed on one hundred and sixty acres. It was section 27, township 8, range 20; this was nine miles west and one mile south of Sentinel. I built a sod house. I dug down about three feet into the ground and made the sides and covered this with lumber that I hauled from Mountain View, which was a distance of forty-one miles. It took three days to make the trip.

I dug a well, broke five acres of land, and planted a patch of kaffir corn. I lived out there about six months, then sold my rights to another man and I went back to the city. After staying there for several months I went to Marlow and got a job hauling freight from Marlow to Lawton. I had to stop over night and always stayed in the Indian Reservation at Lawton. I camped with Quannah Parker, Comanche Chief.

The Comanche Tribe lived entirely by hunting, their principal food was buffalo meat. They lived in lodges made of poles and covered with buffalo skins. They did not attempt to cultivate the soil. They gathered fruits and herbs and traded these with Indians of other tribes. They were very shy and talked very little. I stayed there for several nights before I ever saw a woman.

I was at Marlow until 1916, then I moved back to Sentinel where I now reside. I have passed my

old claim lots of times since I filed on it and have wished many times that I had kept it. My father filed on one side just across the road from me. They are both very good farms; the soil is very rich and fertile.

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