

WITTEN, EARL

INTERVIEW

#8844

417

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

Field Worker's name Maurice H. Anderson

This report made on (date) October 14, 1937.

1. Name Mr. Earl Witten

2. Post Office Address Pauls Valley Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 12 Year 1893

5. Place of birth Missouri

6. Name of Father C. P. Witten Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Minnie Smith Place of birth Missouri

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 _____.

Interview with Mr. Earl Witten
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

Mr. Earl Witten, born 1893 in Missouri. I came to the Indian Territory with my father and mother in 1896. I was three years old. We settled at Pauls Valley in the Chickasaw Nation. My father, C. P. Witten, put in a grocery store then located on what was known as Smoky Row. Then Smoky Row was main street. My first school was at Pauls Valley. The school house was a two story building. Mr. Osborn was the superintendent of the school; it was a free school. Pauls Valley had the first free school in the Chickasaw Nation. Albert Rennie was the United States Commissioner for this district and John Clemons was the United States Marshal.

In 1908 the Washita River was higher than I ever have seen it; people rode up and down the streets in boats.

In 1908 three towns had a fight on to see which one would get the county seat. Elmore City, Wynnewood,

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and Pauls Valley. Pauls Valley won by a large majority of votes. In 1910 the people of Oklahoma voted to locate the state Capitol at Oklahoma City and it won by a majority of several thousand. At that time the capitol of Oklahoma was located at Guthrie.

Governor Haskell was the governor of Oklahoma at that time. Lee Cruce became governor of Oklahoma in 1911 and served until 1915.

In April 1918 I went to France with the ninth Division and served through the World War, receiving only one wound. After Armistice November 11, 1918, I went into Germany with the Army of Occupation and stayed there six months, then I was sent back to the United States and discharged. After my return home I bought an army airplane and located the first and only airport at Pauls Valley. Mr. Jackson and I became partners in the garage business and were the owners of the first garage in Pauls Valley. At one time Pauls Valley had more airplanes at its flying field than any other town in the United States according to its size. I am now postmaster of Pauls Valley. I have lived in Pauls Valley since 1896.