

ZIMMERMAN, BARNEY INTERVIEW #12548

367

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

368

ZIMMERMAN, BARNEY.      INTERVIEW.      12548.

Field Worker's name Johnson H. Hampton.

This report made on (date) December 30 1937

1. Name Mr. Barney Zimmerman, a pioneer (Jew)

2. Post Office Address Antlers, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 15 Year 1854

5. Place of birth Russia.

6. Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth Russia.

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

7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth Russia.

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 Eight.

ZIMMERMAN, BARNEY.

INTERVIEW.

12548.

Johnson H. Hampton,  
Investigator.  
December 30, 1937.

Interview with Barney Zimmerman,  
Antlers, Oklahoma.

I was born March 15, 1854, in my old country, Russia. I came to New York and lived there for six years; I then went to Nashville, Tennessee. I then lived there for a while; then went to Fort Smith, Arkansas. I went to the Cherokee Nation and was there when the Cherokees had their payments, I think that it was about \$200.00 per person.

I traded with them and sold them goods. I then moved to Paris, Texas, where I lived for three years; I then went back to Nashville and married.

I came to Antlers in 1892; I put in a dry goods store and lived in a tent with my wife until I could rent a house or build one; there were not many houses in this town at that time but I finally rented a house and moved into it. I started my life in the dry goods store.

Before I put up the store I peddled throughout this country afoot and carried the goods on my back.

I finally bought a team and a hack which I used after that; I sold lots of goods in this country before and after I put up the store. I would put some goods in my hack and pull out. I sold lots of goods that way and got the money for them and when I was peddling through the country I figured that Antlers would some day make a good town, so when I got enough money together I went down to Paris, Texas, and bought up some dry goods. I had them shipped to Antlers where I opened up my dry goods store; at that time I put in my store there were only two other stores here so I rented a big frame house on the corner and went to work.

The town was very small then; there were about forty or fifty houses in town and very few white people living here and at that time there were no schools. They had one church; it was the Methodist people and a few years after that the Catholic people built a church and a school; then Brother E. Brantly, a Presbyterian minister, came and built his church. He organized the

ZIMMERMAN, BARNEY. INTERVIEW. 12548.

3

first school for the town. The children had been attending the Catholic school up to this time. The Brantly school ran until the town got big enough to build a public school and then it went out of existence. Then several churches were built and are still being used for religious services.

In 1893 the Choctaws got a payment of \$103.00 per person and I did a good business with them and sold them lots of goods. They did not get any more payments for a long while, then they got several payments and I did a good business then for they had plenty of money and bought quantities of goods. I have sold the Choctaws much goods since I put up my store and until I quit business about three years ago and am now on the retired list.

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I used to go to the Choctaw court ground and put up a tent and sell goods there; they would hold court for about four weeks. They did not have the money but they got scrip for their services at the

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ZIMMERMAN, BARNEY.

INTERVIEW.

12548.

4

court and I bought or traded goods for scrip; I would buy the scrip at a discount, hold it for a while then take it to the Treasurer of the Choctaw Nation and get my money out of it. In that way I did not lose any money and sometimes I would keep the scrip and pay my permit with it. We had to pay a certain sum on our stock of goods every three months; some collector would come around collecting the taxes on our goods; then I would pay them with the scrip. I sometimes would pay as much as \$60.00 for the three months; I would get full value for the scrip and in that way I would save right smart money.

At one time before the court was moved to Mayhew, Indian Territory, which was just a few miles from the place where the old court ground was, I ran out of goods and had to send back to town to get some more. The boys who went after the goods got loaded up and started back to the court ground but as they were crossing Boggy Creek the team balked and the whole

ZIMMERMAN, BARNEY.

INTERVIEW.

12548.

5

wagon and team went into the water and drowned; I lost the whole thing, team, wagon and goods; I figured that I lost about \$7000.00 on that deal.

I never saw but one Indian whipped; I do not know what he had done but they pulled off his shirt and whipped him on his bare back. They gave him about thirty-nine lashes on his bare back.

I was living in this town when V. M. Locke and Jones had their trouble; I did not know what it was all about but they shot Locke's house full of holes but did not kill anyone in that fight; the Lockes were camped across the Kiamichi River and there must have been about a hundred and fifty camped there. I do not know how many men Jones had but they were camped at Goodland but before they got ready to fight it out the soldiers were sent here from somewhere and put a stop to it. The Indians then dispersed and went home; no blood was shed although the soldiers were kept here for some time before they were called back to where they came from.

ZIMMERMAN, BARNEY.

INTERVIEW.

12548.

6

I have lived here in Antlers for several years and have seen the town grow from a small village to a pretty good sized town. I have seen the country grow as well as the town. There were very few white people when I came to Antlers and the country was open, with very few houses which were all Choctaw houses, for there were no white people out in the country and the Indians lived so far apart that there were no houses to be seen along the road; the Indians lived in communities and there was a distance of several miles between their settlements.

The Indians had only very small farms, maybe about five acres to a house and they raised their corn; back in those days farming was good. They did not have to have a big farm to raise all the corn they needed and they used to make good crops at that time.

Nearly all farmers had hogs and cattle; they did not have to work very much to live as the country was full of wild game and the rivers were full of fish.

ZIMMERMAN, BARNEY.

INTERVIEW.

12548.

I have been in this town ever since I came here and have raised my children here in this town; they have attended school with the Indian children. I have traded with the Indians and for years would let them have anything they wanted on credit. I never lost one penny on the Indians and they are honest and law-abiding people, just as true to their word as men can be; there are no bad Indians; I never saw a bad one among them. The Indians did not bother the white people.

They would fight among themselves and maybe kill an Indian once in a while but they are good people and never bothered the white people at all. I have lived a long time but I never did hear of an Indian having trouble with a white man nor even with the negroes and the best friends I have are full-blood Choctaws. I have been here so long that they all know me and I have treated them the best I know how and they have treated me in the same way.

ZIMMERMAN, BARNEY.

INTERVIEW.

.12548.

8

My mother has been dead for a long time and when Mother died my father came and lived with me until he died; he was a little past a hundred years old when he died and is buried in our cemetery at Dallas, Texas. He was from the old country, Russia.

I am now living in Antlers, having retired from business. One of my sons is in business in Antlers now.