

YOUNG, J. I.

INTERVIEW.

#4429

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Field Worker: John F. Daugherty,
June 12, 1937.

Interview with J. I. Young
Sulphur, Okla.

Born July 8, 1874; Missouri.

Parents D. A. Young, father,
Indiana. Farmer.

LIFE OF A PIONEER MAN

My father was D. A. Young, who was born in Indiana, December 23, 1832. Mother was born in Indiana, September 8, 1836. Father was a farmer. There were eight children in our family. I was born in Missouri, July 8, 1874.

When the Cherokee Strip was opened in 1893, for settlement, father made the run. He was in a wagon with a friend of his by the name of Smith. They had a fine team of horses. I was along with a chuck wagon, drawn by a span of mules. I was supposed to follow Mr. Smith and father. People were there in covered wagons, in two wheeled carts, on race horses, in buggies, and walking, some drove horses; some drove oxen, and others drove mules. There

was a soldier about every ten feet all along the line. We started from Manchester just south of Anthony, Kansas. At twelve o'clock the guns were fired and the race was on. People ran over each other in their eagerness to get to a claim. Some were killed. The team which Mr. Smith drove ran so swiftly my mule team couldn't keep up with them, so I was left behind. They ran for twenty miles before they could be stopped. Father staked a claim at Jet, thirty miles from Manchester. They spent the night there and I met them the next morning, coming back to look for me and the food. They were nearly starved, having done without food for twenty-four hours. I got lost in some sand hills and had a hard time trying to get out.

Eighty acres of the land which father staked were reserved salt plains, so he bought the eighty acres adjoining his other eighty so as to have a hundred-sixty acres. There was a fifty acre Prairie Dog town on father's land, and several buffalo wallows. We ditched the water from the wallows into the dog town and drowned many of them. Those that couldn't be drowned were starved to death by punching in their runs with a baseball bat. When they

burrowed out they were so weak they were easily caught and killed.

The first three years we lived on this claim we nearly starved to death. There were no hogs and not much game. It was so dry the crops were poor and the land was hard to cultivate. I worked on a farm part of the time for thirteen dollars a month. Men walked fifty or sixty miles into Kansas at wheat harvesting time and worked for fifty cents per day and took it in meat and lard. They would ship this back on the train.

In 1902, I signed up for a claim in the Comanche and Kiowa opening but I failed to draw a claim, so I leased a quarter section of school land five miles west of

~~Comanche~~. I built a barn in among the trees by cutting poles and setting them up from one tree to the other. It was covered with poles and prairie hay, which I cut and placed on top of the poles.

I trapped a great deal the first winter I was here, catching polecats and minks. I sold fifteen dollars worth of hides and put that into hogs. They all took the cholera and died and a hail storm completely wiped out my wheat crop,

so I became thoroughly disgusted and sold out and went into the furniture business in Comanche.

I moved to Sulphur in 1905, and have been here continuously since in the furniture business.

I was married to Emily Bergersean, August 13, 1899. We have two children, a girl and a boy. The daughter is the wife of Jess Pullen, Assistant Attorney General of the State of Oklahoma.