

HOLT, TOM.

INTERVIEW

8790

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

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Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson.

This report made on (date) September 30, 1937. 193

1. Name Mr. Tom Holt.

2. Post Office Address Mayeville, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 19 Year 1879.

5. Place of birth Indian Territory.

6. Name of Father John Holt. Place of birth North Carolina.

Other information about father Deceased.

7. Name of Mother Alice Morris. Place of birth Fort Washita, Indian Territory.

Other information about mother Deceased.

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 _____.

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Maurice Anderson,
-Investigator,
Sept. 30, 1937.

An Interview With Tom Holt,
Maysville, Oklahoma.

My grandfather, Jonathan Morris, came to the Indian Territory in 1846 and went to work for the United States Government as a blacksmith at Fort Washita in the Chickasaw Nation near Tishomingo.

He had to fix wagons and plows for the Chickasaw Indians but was paid by the United States Government. He received \$995.00 a year with everything furnished.

In that day and time they burned charcoal to heat irons with. One day while Grandfather had nothing to do, he went up into the mountains on a hunting trip, and while there he came across an outcrop of coal.

At that time he didn't know anything about coal, didn't even know what it was for, but when he returned to Fort Washita, he carried a piece of this coal back with him and the next day he put this piece of "black rock" as he called it on the fire and found that it would burn and make a hot fire, so the next day he took his two-

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wheeled wagon and a yoke of steers and brought a load of coal to his shop. He worked for the Government until 1856 and after finding this coal he never used anything else to heat his irons with. According to Grandfather's story he was the first white man to find this coal.

In 1856 Grandfather went back to Texas and when the war broke out he served through it. Right after the war one day at a town in Texas he met a man named Smith Paul who was there after a load of supplies and by making the acquaintance of Mr. Paul who told my grandfather that he was from the Indian Territory, my grandfather made a deal with Smith Paul to come to the valley and farm.

This was in the latter part of 1865.

There was an old negro woman living in that part of Texas named Harris, who had eight children. At the close of the war she was set free without anything but these children, so after making this deal with Smith Paul, Grandfather with my grandmother and this old negro woman and her children loaded up and pulled out for the Smith Paul Valley.

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This negro woman's oldest boy was about fourteen years old and was named Nathan Harris. Nathan being big enough to work, my grandfather made him male boy and Nathan's job was to drive the mules through, as my grandfather had several mules at that time. The reason Mr. Paul made that deal with Grandfather was because Grandfather had mules and Mr. Paul hired Grandfather to break up his valley and put it in corn.

On arriving at the valley, Nathan helped my grandfather to build his log house. At that time, Smith Paul was living in his wagon. but after my grandfather's house was built Nathan helped Smith Paul build his willow log house. My grandfather and this negro boy, Nathan Harris turned the sod under and planted three hundred acres of corn the first year, and this corn was sold to the Government at Fort Sill.

Grandfather farmed in the valley for Mr. Paul for two years then moved to the place where Alex is now located and went to farming for himself and the negro boy, Nathan Harris, stayed with Smith Paul.

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My father, John Holt, came to the Indian Territory in 1873 with a wagon train made up of farmers living in Texas; there was about fifteen wagons in all. My father came from Texas to the Indian Territory long before I was born but I have often heard him say that Coffee Randolph, Tommie Shannon, Joe Myers, Lyman Friend, Sam Friend, Austin Hart and G. W. Randolph were in this wagon train and when it stopped every man went to work building a log house. This party settled about three miles north-east of where Maysville is now located.

At that time my father was ^a young man and in the early '70's he was married to Miss Alice Morris, the daughter of Jonathan Morris and on the 19th day of February, 1879, I was born in the Randolph Community.

In my early boyhood days I have seen deer and turkey go by in droves. By the time I was big enough to remember things the Randolph Community had broken up, that is, the people who came with the wagon train had scattered around over the country and some of them became our largest ranch owners. The school and the surrounding community still went by the name of Randolph.

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I remember in 1884 that the people had built a big brush arbor near the cemetery at Whitehead and a young preacher came from Missouri to hold a big meeting.

The meeting had been going on for three or four nights and my father and mother had been attending it every night. As we were on our way to church one night, I remember hearing my father tell Mother not to be alarmed at what she would see that night, as some of the boys were going to introduce the new preacher into their circle. Of course, we children didn't know what was going to take place, but after the preacher was through preaching and everyone was getting ready to start home a gang of cowboys from the Sam Garvin ranch and, I believe, some from the Jack Florence ranch began shooting. They shot out the lights and everything was in an uproar. I remember children were crying and women screaming. I have heard my father talk about it and he said after things quieted down they went out looking for the preacher and it was about three hours before they found him and when they did find him he was about a half a mile from the arbor hidden under a brush pile. The preacher wanted to leave the next day for the

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state of Missouri but by promising him they would appoint deputies and there wouldn't be anymore disturbance, he stayed on and I have heard my father say there were about a hundred or more people saved in that meeting.

Riley Bandy owned the hotel and boarding house at Whitehead. I remember it was at his boarding house that I drank my first iced tea. In the winter time people would haul ice from the river and store it in a house they had fixed for that purpose and cover the ice with sawdust, and in this way they would have ice all summer.

My father bought one of the first mowing machines shipped to Pauls Valley in 1889, and my brother owns that mowing machine today and uses it in putting up hay.

Since 1879 Whitehead is as far east and Maysville is as far west as I have lived. I lived on the farm until 1904 and at that time I moved to Maysville and put in a blacksmith shop. I worked on the first automobile that came to Maysville and on the first airplane.

I still own my blacksmith shop at Maysville where I have lived since 1904.