

HOWELL, THOMAS PETER (DR.) INTERVIEW "8346

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

Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson.

This report made on (date) August 30, 1937. 1937

1. Name Dr. Thomas P. Howell.

2. Post Office Address Davis, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Three miles east of Fort Arbuckle.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year 1849.

5. Place of birth Egletown, Choctaw Nation.

6. Name of Father Calvin H. Howell Place of birth North Carolina.

Other information about father Deceased.

7. Name of Mother Rhoda Pitchlynn. Place of birth Mississippi.

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 4.

Maurice R. Anderson,  
Field Worker.

An Interview With Dr. Thomas P.  
Howell, of Davis, Oklahoma.

I was born at Eagletown, Eagle County, in the  
Chectaw Nation, in 1849.

I attended the Cumberland University at Lebanon,  
Tennessee, later graduating from the Medical Department  
of the University of Maryland. I was one of seventeen  
students selected from the great body of medical students,  
to act as interne in the University Hospital at Balti-  
more. By remaining throughout the summers of the two  
years I served in the hospital, I received what amounted  
to four years of practical experience. This proved in-  
valuable to me when I returned to the Indian Territory  
to take up the work of a general practitioner in the  
newly settled country.

I left Washington and came to Memphis by rail, and  
decided I would take a boat from there. There were many  
emigrants taking the water way to the Golden West. I  
made the acquaintance of many of these homeseekers. Like  
all very young doctors, I had had my name and professional  
title printed upon my brand new trunk which I brought  
with me from Washington.

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A child belonging to one of the homeseekers was taken very ill and in their search for medical aid some one recalled having seen the name "Dr. Howell" upon my trunk. I was soon found. The child had pneumonia. The experience I had gained in similar cases during my period as interne, enabled me to save the child's life. This was my first patient.

On reaching the Territory, I went in partnership with my old friend, Dr. I. W. Nelson, at Atocha in 1873. I stayed in partnership with him one year.

In 1874 I came to Pauls Valley. It was then a cross-roads trading point. I was the only doctor at Pauls Valley at that time.

Zach Gardner, a Choctaw Indian, had settled on the Washita river east of where Pauls Valley is now, shortly after the Civil War and was founder of the first grist mill there. It was a water power mill, the Washita river furnishing the power. Smith Paul was one of the first men to locate in this valley and Pauls Valley was named for him. Tom Waite, Zach Gardner, Jimmie Gardner and several others were large farmers and they had the contract

to sell their corn to the government at Fort Sill, for one dollar a bushel.

The life of a country doctor at that time was very hard in this newly settled country. Pauls Valley was just far enough from the Texas line to be a rendezvous for outlaws of every description. In the running fights between outlaws and pursuing officers and law-abiding citizens, many were wounded and the country doctor had to lend his assistance to the wounded of either party. There were so few doctors in this country that even the outlaws couldn't afford to be careless and use them for targets in their free-for-all shooting scrapes.

There was little money in the country in those days. That was how I happened to start a ranch. I had to accept cattle as pay for professional services; it was a choice of cattle or nothing. I started my ranch a few miles east of Fort Arbuckle in 1876, on Wild Horse Creek. The two-room log house I had built still stands. I had it moved a short distance later and had the home I now live in put on the spot where the log house did stand.

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C. J. Grant and myself established the first bank in Pauls Valley. C. J. Grant, Noah Lael, Perry Froman and myself owned the first bank in Davis. Doctor Sherley owned a general store at Cherokee Town when I came to Pauls Valley.

After the soldiers were sent to Fort Sill from Fort Arbuckle, the government established a school for negroes. Mr. Tom Grant bought Fort Arbuckle from the Chickasaw Governor for \$50.00, after the soldiers left there.

My father, Calvin H. Howell, came from North Carolina at an early date and married Rhoda Pitchlynn, the sister of Colonel Peter P. Pitchlynn, who was the first governor of the Choctaws. My uncle was a large slave owner, and on account of the speeches he made trying to keep the Choctaws out of the War, he was forced to go to Washington to save his life, and he lived there the rest of his life.

I still live on my ranch that I started in 1876. Most of it is cut up into farms.