

HAMILTON, PETER

INTERVIEW

#8885

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HAMILTON, PETER (colored) INTERVIEW
BIOGRAPHY FORM
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
 Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name John F. Daugherty

This report made on (date) August 17 1937

1. Name Peter Hamilton (colored)
2. Post Office Address Sulphur, Okla.
3. Residence address (or location) General Delivery
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 4 Year 1869
5. Place of birth West of Fort Arbuckle in Chickasaw Nation on Wild Horse Creek.

6. Name of Father George Hamilton Place of birth Unknown

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother Sally James Place of birth Unknown

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 Nil.

John F. Dougherty
Interviewer
August 17, 1937

Interview with
Peter Hamilton
Sulphur, Oklahoma.

My parents were George Hamilton and Sally James Hamilton. Father was a farmer. I was the only child and was born March 4, 1869, west of Fort Arbuckle in the Chickasaw Nation on Wild Horse Creek.

Fort Arbuckle was named for Colonel Arbuckle of the United States Army when he was stationed at Fort Sill. I cannot remember when the soldiers were at the Fort. They were moved to Fort Sill, one hundred miles west of there, while I was a very small child. I can remember the buildings at the Fort, however. Some of them were built of logs, and ceiled inside with lumber.

The commissary was a long frame building and their sleeping quarters were of rock. Garrison Spring furnished water for the Fort. This was walled with rock, and covered with a small building.

I attended school at Fort Arbuckle. This was a

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school established for colored people and taught by professor Eely, sent there by the Government.

We lived near the Chisholm Trail. Each spring cattle would be driven up that trail by the thousands from Texas into Kansas. Some days they would pass our house all day, and when night came they would camp near us. They would lose many cattle during stampedes at night. The cattle would leave the herd and could not be found. When morning came the cattle men had to drive on without them. Those cattle we killed for our beef. We always had plenty of beef.

In August, we would kill a beef and make "jerked" beef out of it. We would jerk it into small strips and hang it up in the trees or spread it out on the house to dry in the hot August sun. It would get as hard as a rock, and when we would want some beef in the winter, we would take this beef out of the sack, boil it until tender, beat it on the mortar and either fry it or made hash of it.

I helped to clear the right-of-way for the Santa Fe Railroad north of Davis, in 1886. I cut the timber

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ahead of the grading crew, for which I received seventy-five cents a day and my board. I never received more than a dollar a day.

I used to enjoy a trip with my uncle to Fort Sill, occasionally. He peddled eggs, chickens and butter there and he would often let me go with him. We went in a covered wagon and it took about a week to make the trip there and back. We would camp every night. One night he killed a fat skunk and fixed it for our breakfast, but it did not taste good to me.

We freighted our supplies from Denison, Texas, until Tom Green and his partner put in a trading store at Pauls Valley. Then we went there to trade. This was a trading post licensed by the Chickasaw Government and served the Washita Valley. There was an Indian clerk named Grant who used to wait on the Indian trade. He later became the proprietor of this store.

When the Dawes Commission enrolled the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, they set up offices in certain districts so that each Indian entitled to be enrolled might be able to get to one of these offices.

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In the Chickasaw Nation they had offices at Purcell, Pauls Valley, Ardmore and Tishomingo. I went to Pauls Valley, since that was the nearest to the place where we lived.

The commission travelled to each of these towns and stayed until the Indians were all enrolled. I got a Freedman's right of forty acres. When the time came to file on the allotted land that was only one office. That was at Tishomingo so I went there to file.

The Choctaw and Chickasaw Freedmen got one hundred and thirty dollars worth of land and the members of the tribes received one thousand and forty dollars worth of land.

The land was appraised from twenty five cents an acre to six dollars and a half an acre. The Creeks, Cherokee and Seminole Freedmen got full tribal rights.

I married Ruth Butter, a Choctaw Freedman.