

MITCHELL, J. S. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

8971

**423**

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

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Field Worker's name Laurice A. Anderson,This report made on (date) October 21, 193 71. Name Mrs. J. S. Mitchell,2. Post Office Address Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

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

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month x Day x Year 18715. Place of birth Arkansas6. Name of Father J. H. Mitchell Place of birth Tennessee7. Name of Mother Rebecca Keys Place of birth TennesseeOther 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.

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Maurice R. Anderson,  
Investigator,  
October 21, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. J. S. Mitchell,  
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

I was born in 1871 in Arkansas, but came to the  
Indian Territory in 1895.

It was in the Summer of 1895 when I got to Pauls  
Valley and I got a job from Jim Crawford helping put  
up hay and was paid 75 cents a day; that was considered  
high wages at that time but everything was cheap.

In the Fall I gathered corn for Mr. Crawford. Corn  
sold for 15 cents a bushel delivered to the barn and if  
one wanted to do his own gathering it was only 10 cents  
a bushel. I have seen more corn left in the fields than  
there is raised now.

There was some cotton raised but not like there is  
today for most people just raised what they could gather  
with their own family as there were not very many people  
living around Pauls Valley at that time.

There were some large cattle owners living around  
there for at that time it was more of a cattle town than

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an agricultural town. There were several large feeding pens along the Washita River here then for Pauls Valley was a fine place to feed out cattle as there was lots of corn raised here and it was cheap and the Washita River had plenty of water in it. Then, too, there were very few fences at that time in this part of the country and the prairie land around here had the finest grass which in the Summer looked like a large wheat field. Another thing that made this part of the country a fine place to raise stock were the short mild winters and long summers.

There were a few turkeys and deer around here when I first came and the woods were full of quail. There were also plenty of fish in the creeks around here which at that time were running streams but today are dry.

There was lots of wild fruit growing around here; plums, berries and grapes, and one could go along the banks of these small creeks and gather a wagon load of pecans if you wanted them for there was no market at that time for pecans and people did not pay any attention to them.

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On the west side of the place where Pauls Valley is now there was nothing but briar thicket, right where my home is now located. Then, I could have bought the land for \$1.00 an acre, but could not get a clear title to it then and I was afraid to take a chance on any of this land. Today the lots around where I live are worth around \$150.00 each. There were only a few stores and a bank at Pauls Valley then. The courthouse was built in 1895. The old courthouse building is now occupied by the Ford Motor Company. Before this court was established, court was held at Ardmore or at Paris, Texas.

Nearly all the business places faced the railroad at that time and what is Paul Avenue now was called Smoky Row then and it was considered a very tough place. There were small eating places, drinking places, and gambling dives on Smoky Row and it was nothing at all to see a shooting scrape there. Men with plenty of money in their pockets would get drunk and lie out behind these drinking places all night and would not be bothered.

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A Mr. Zach Gardner owned the first mill and gin located on the Washita River east of Pauls Valley and this gin and mill was run by water power.

At that time one could buy a good farming team for \$40.00 to \$50.00.

The post office was placed in a building by itself in 1898, and Mr. J. M. Dorchester was appointed postmaster. Before that it had been located in Miller and Green's store and in Mr. Annie's store, I believe.