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INTERVIEW

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Interviewer, Maurice R. Anderson,
July 23, 1937 ✓

Interview with Mr. J. S. Miller,
Paoli, Okla.

Born Texas, 1864.

Parents J. H. Miller, Tenn.
Ellen Morris, Tenn.

I was born in 1864, in Texas. I came to the Indian Territory in 1888. I had been living with my father and mother in Texas. Before I came to the Indian Territory I was working on my uncle's ranch. I owned my horse and saddle and had one month's pay in my pocket; that was thirty dollars.

On that pay day I told my uncle that I was leaving for the Indian Territory and I pulled out that day with my horse and saddle and thirty dollars in money.

I remember I rode two days after I had crossed Red River before I met a white man. I met several Indians but couldn't talk to them as they couldn't understand me.

I was following an old cattle trail and I knew I was going to come on to a store some place. I rode into a place

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called Mill Creek, in the Chickasaw Nation. I camped at Governor Harris' place a few days; I met a man by the name of McDaniel who owned a large farm near Ardmore. Then Ardmore was a small place only a store and a blacksmith shop. I worked on a farm two years. I helped build the first school house south of Ardmore; it was a one-room, log house with a dirt floor and we split logs and hewed them down for seats. The teacher would hold school about three months out of the year.

I married Ellen McDaniel, the daughter of the man I was working for.

By this time, I owned a team and wagon so I loaded what few things I owned and moved to a place called Boff, in the Chickasaw Nation. There were two stores and a few log houses there when I went there. I built a one-room, log house and leased some land from Mr. Boff, for whom the town of Boff was named. There was no school there at that time. My wife and I had no children at this time, but there were several families living there who did have children, so I talked to Mr. Boff about building a school as he owned the land around there and he consented and gave one acre of

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ground for the school house. We called a meeting and there were about thirty men who attended. I was elected one of the trustees and was appointed to see to the building of the school. The men said they would furnish their wagons and teams to haul logs with and to help build the house. After we got the school house built, our next problem was to get a teacher. At that time I was busy in my crops, and didn't have time to try to get a teacher. To help out, my wife taught three months of school that year. That was Roff's first free school. The next year we got a man teacher to come there and ^{he} took the school over. The farmers ^{each} paid him one dollar a month. I was one of the trustees and didn't have any children going to school but I paid one dollar a month to help keep the school going. We would have Sunday school every Sunday in the school house.

I took a part in trying to build Roff up and when New Ada started building, Mr. Roff and myself set in to try to get the railroad through Roff. The surveyors were running out the line for the railroad and we saw they were going to miss Roff by about three miles. We did some hard talking and pleading. The way they were surveying this line out

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they had to cross a big creek and that meant a long bridge would have to be built. We showed the head engineer on this job what it would cost the railroad and by going through by Roff it wouldn't cost so much and wouldn't take as many bridges and we told him it meant the life of our town to have the railroad come through.

Well, we won out and the railroad came through Roff.

By this time there were several houses and stores there. After we got the railroad through Roff, I set in to get a high school and I helped build the high school. My daughter went through this high school and in later years taught school six years in Pauls Valley.

I now live northeast of Paoli, on the farm.