

COLBERT, JOE

INTERVIEW

4984

98

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

4984

Field Worker's name R. H. BoatmanThis report made on (date) July 21 19371. Name Joe Colbert2. Post Office Address Purcell, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) 429 West Adams4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 7 Year 18575. Place of birth Tishomingo, Oklahoma6. Name of Father Henry Colbert Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Lulsah Humphery Place of birth Indian Territory

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

COLBERT, JOE

INTERVIEW

4984

Biography of Mr. Joe Colbert  
Purcell, Oklahoma

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I was born October 7, 1857, in Indian Territory, near the town of Tishomingo, in the Chickasaw Nation. I am three-eighths Chickasaw Indian and I say that the Chickasaw Indians are and always have been a peaceful tribe.

I attended school at Harley Institute, an Indian school located three miles south of Tishomingo. This is the only school that I ever attended, although the building was destroyed by fire and was rebuilt, three miles north of Tishomingo on Pennington Creek and that building is still there.

The Chickasaw Indian agency was at Muskogee. It is still located at the same place at this time.

I recall several raids, made by the Comanche Indians.

The Comanches would come from the west in bands or in small gangs and would steal the cattle and horses of the Chickasaws and would run them back west on their own

COLBERT, JOE

INTERVIEW

4984

2

range. The only way that the Chickasaws could get their cattle and horses back was just to trail the Comanches up and whip them out and get their stock. I recall once when my father and I lived south of the Arbuckle mountains near the frontier, that the Comanches raided one night and the next night following. Father and I tied our horses in the yard around the house and father and I stationed ourselves back of the house to guard.

Well, about eleven o'clock that night two of those Comanches crawled over the yard fence and were trying to steal our horses and father shot one of them. He fell in the yard and the other ran and just as he jumped the fence, father let him have it and he fell just over the fence.

I came to what is now McClain County, on November 22, 1878, and began work as a cow puncher for a Mr. Campbell and <sup>a</sup>Mr. Johnson, ranchmen.

They had three ranches, one near Washington, one near New Castle and one at Minco. I rode the range from Lexington to Minco but worked mostly on the ranch at Washington.

COLBERT, JOE

INTERVIEW

4984

3

There were 10,00 head of cattle kept on the ranch there. I worked six years for these men and in 1884, began to work for Stowe and Myers, ranchmen at Whitehead and worked one year for them as a cow puncher and in 1885, I was married to Miss Nora Ingram the daughter of a famous ranchman at Whitehead and the same year, 1885, I was appointed as Revenue Collector for the Chickasaw Nation, the boundaries of the Chickasaw Nation being on the north the South Canadian River; on the south the Red River; on the west the 93rd Meridian.

The revenue was collected on all cattle, a fee of 25¢ per head per year was charged. This money was turned over to the Indian Agency which was located at Muskogee, for the Chickasaw Tribe.

I was very prominent as a leader of the Chickasaw tribe and I have been awarded many high honors for my activity among the Chickasaw Indians.

I also helped to form and build the Chickasaw Tribal

COLBERT, JOE

INTERVIEW

4984

4

Government. I was appointed County Commissioner of McClain County by Governor R. L. Williams, to fill an unexpired term, and was re-elected by the vote of the people. I served continuously as Commissioner of McClain County for twelve years.

I have been actively engaged in farming and stock raising all of my life; I have worked hard and been very successful in all my undertakings. I resigned from active work of the above nature in the year 1935. I now reside at my own home at 429 West Adams Street, Purcell.