

CRAUN, GEORGE A.

INTERVIEW

8730

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

CRAUN, GEORGE A.

INTERVIEW

#8730

Field Worker's name **Mildred B. McFarland**

This report made on (date) **September 27** 193**7**

1. Name **Mr. George A. Craun**

2. Post Office Address **Jones, Oklahoma**

3. Residence address (or location) **R. R. #2**

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month **September** Day **17** Year **1860**

5. Place of birth **Augusta, Virginia**

6. Name of Father **Daniel Craun** Place of birth **Augusta, Virginia**

Born 1818

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother **Lucinda Craun** Place of birth **Rodney, Virginia**

Born 1823

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 _____.

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Mildred B. McFarland
Investigator
September 27, 1937.

Interview with George A. Craun
Route 2, Jones, Oklahoma.

At the time of the opening of Oklahoma in 1889, I lived with my wife and two small children on a farm near Carthage, Missouri. We did not own this farm, and as we wanted one of our own, we decided to make the run. We loaded a covered wagon with a cook stove, bedding, plow, one dozen chickens and a few dishes and cooking utensils and started out. We led a cow behind the wagon. I owned two very good horses and a saddle.

When we arrived at the eastern boundary line, I made camp for my wife and children. I saddled up one of the horses and rode him in the Run. I staked my claim ten miles southeast of Edmond in what is known as the "Nine Mile Flats". There were two "Sooners" on the place. I had quite a time getting them off. One of them stayed with me all winter and helped me plow and plant a crop. When he left, all the pay he asked was my "fiddle". I gave it to him gladly.

I plowed a few furrows around my place and started a dugout before I went after my family. They were all right

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but were uneasy about me. I built a raft to take the wagon across the North Canadian River. When we were in the middle of the stream our wagon rolled off into the water. No damage was done except that four hens were drowned. When we arrived at our place, the "Sooner" whom I had left there had almost completed the dugout. He had made a table of split logs, five chairs of split logs with three pegs for the legs and had put a dish cupboard across the corner of the room. Later we cut small trees and made a "four poster bed". I used rope to make the springs.

We had no well, but drank river water until 1894, when I dug a well of my own. I covered the dugout with cottonwood slabs and then covered it all with sod. We had no door. In the winter we hung the wagon canvas over it to keep out the cold. Just across the road from my claim a man named Hartsell had staked a claim. After he had filed on it he opened a general store. The post office was in the store, and Mr. Hartsell was postmaster and storekeeper. Several stores were erected later and it was a small town before you knew it. It was called "Hartsell". There is nothing left of Hartsell now except an old pine tree that stood in front of the post office.

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This tree is tall, beautiful and green. The mail was brought from Oklahoma City, twice a week to Hartsell in a two wheeled cart, drawn by one horse. This was called the "Star Mail Route".

We had a pretty hard time for several years after we came here. We lived in the dugout about a year and a half. I then had enough logs prepared to build a log house. It was 16 x 18 feet, with a tiny room overhead. That house is still on my place and, until about a year ago, was used by my tenants. It is covered with cottonwood shingles, that I helped to make.

I brought the first chickens to the Nine Mile Flat. The next morning the old rooster was crowing lustily when several neighbors rode upon horse back. They said they were looking for game and heard this rooster crow, but were afraid to shoot, until they knew whether he belonged to anyone, as no one they knew had chickens.

There were plenty of deer, wild turkey, prairie chicken, squirrel and rabbits. The river had plenty of fish. When I shot a deer, I always divided with my neighbors. We held camp meetings in Hartsell. The men folks would get together and

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build a shelter of poles and brush. We cut willow branches to cover it. People came from forty and fifty miles to attend these meetings. They would camp there for four or five days.

There is a graveyard called the "89'er graveyard", located three miles south and one mile west of my place. Ted Meyers is just one-half mile from it and can give the exact location. He and I are the only '89'ers left in the Nine Mile Flat.

The Kickapoo Reservation was not far from my place. About once every two weeks the Indians would come to see us. They would come in single file on their ponies. They wore bright colored blankets and moccasins. Their hair was shiny black, they wore it in two long braids down their backs. The squaws carried their papooses strapped to their backs and when a squaw would get off her pony she would hang the papoose, still strapped to its board, in a tree. The wind would rock it to sleep.

The first time they came, my wife had baked some pies. She gave the squaws some and ever after that, the first thing

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they said upon arriving was, "Me want pie". They never came without leaving a bit of bright colored cloth, some beads or a blanket for my wife. I always tried to be nice to them to avoid having any trouble. I called them all "John".

There were fine people all around us. We always helped one another. There were plenty of black jack trees on the place and I would cut and trim them into fence posts and haul them to Oklahoma City to sell. I received 2 cents each for them. The trimmings were cut into stove wood. I received \$1.00 a load for it. It took all day to make the trip to town and another to come back. The first crops I raised were corn and cotton. My first bale of cotton brought \$30.00 and I received 25 cents a bushel for my corn. The next year I raised wheat which brought 30 cents a bushel. I had to pay 5 cents a bushel to have it hauled to Oklahoma City.

The first school house in our neighborhood was built about three-fourths of a mile from my house. It was built in 1890. The men of the neighborhood built it of logs. We called it "The Red Top". Several years later it burned. We built another and it burned. The third building still stands and is still being used. It still carries the name "Red Top School."

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I have had a telephone for twenty-five or six years,
have a lot of improvements on my place and am enjoying life.