

CRAWFORD, JOHN A.

INTERVIEW

9514

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

Field Worker's name Ethel Mae Yates

This report made on (date) December 27, 1937.

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1. Name John A. Crawford,
  2. Post Office Address Elk City, Oklahoma
  3. Residence address (or location) General Delivery
  4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 26 Year 1883
  5. Place of birth Arkansas

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6. Name of Father George W. Place of birth Alabama  
Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Mary L. Cofman Place of birth Pennsylvania  
Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

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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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Investigator, Ethel Mae Yates,  
December 27, 1937.

Interview with John A. Crawford,  
Elk City, Oklahoma.

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I came from Arkansas to the Indian Territory in the year 1894 with my parents, in a covered wagon. We worked an ox team, camped out at night and slept just any way we could. We came to Pottawatomie country and it took us ten days to make the trip. We settled sixteen miles southeast of Shawnee, and lived in a log cabin with dirt floor and clapboard roof. We cooked part of the time on a campfire out in front of the cabin.

Father put in a crop on the shares and after he got it put in sold his share and was supposed to get \$90.00 for it, but the man ran through with the money and all we realized out of it was a pony, worth about \$15.00, and ten bushels of whip-poor-will peas. We then came to the place where Weatherford is now, and Father filed on a claim two miles north and three west of where Weatherford is now.

We took the side boards off the wagon and set them on the ground and put the wagon sheet and bows over it for a

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roof. We camped here until we could get a dugout made and some of us slept on pallets on the ground and when we would get up in the mornings there would be rattlesnakes under our quilts, and the first thing we would do would be to have a snake-killing.

It was not long until we got a dugout made; it had a dirt floor and a dirt roof and we cooked on a campfire and picked up our wood up and down the canyons. These whip-poor-will peas were all we had to eat for two winters, no salt, no grease, and no bread. They were soaked in "gyp" water that we carried from a "gyp" spring that was about two miles away.

I was eight years old and we had a neighbor who had a pair of shoes that were number eights that were too small for him so he gave them to me and those men's shoes are what I wore. My two smaller brothers did not have a shoe to wear for two winters and Mother had only one dress to wear at a time and it was calico. When Mother's dress wore out, we would manage some way to get her another.

We carried water for two years. Then we took a horse from the plow and gave it to a man to dig a well, and along

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in the spring of 1894, Father, being a butcher, a neighbor hired him to butcher for him. All Father got out of it was the heart and liver and hide of the animal. Father would put the hides in the wagon and drive to El Reno or Minco, which were seventy-five miles a way, and would trade them for a sack of flour.

We had been here three years before we had any school. Along about then enough settlers came in to have a school. so there was a schoolhouse built known as the Taylor school. That is where I went to my first school.

We lived here until 1902 when Father sold out and we came four miles south and one mile west of Shawnee and bought a place and lived in a camp house until we could get a house built and then we began to prosper for a while. We farmed, made good crops and got good prices and in 1911 Father sold out and got \$3,000.00 for our place. We then came to Elk City, then later moved to Altus.

We went to Kansas and stayed for fourteen years. In 1929 I came back to Elk City and have been in and around here ever since.

Father and Mother are both dead now and are buried at

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Altus. I was only a small child when we came to the new country, but I can remember as well as if it was yesterday many times when we have been hungry and cold, with scarcely any clothes and not much of a place to get warm.