

DAVIS, SAM H.

INTERVIEW

4641

341

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

DAVIS, SAM H.

INTERVIEW.

#4641.

Field Worker's name John F. Daugherty.

This report made on (date) June 26, 1937.

1. Name Sam H. Davis.

2. Post office Address Davis, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 14 Year 1858

5. Place of birth Tennessee.

6. Name of Father Thompson Davis Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information about father Farmer.

7. Name of Mother Ally Bausum Place of birth Kentucky.

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 Six.

DAVIS, SAM H.

INTERVIEW.

#4641.

John F. Daugherty,
Interviewer.
June 26, 1937.

Interview with Sam H. Davis,
Davis, Oklahoma.

My father was Thompson A. Davis, born June 9, 1834,
in Tennessee.

Mother was Ally Bausum, born June 2, 1836, in
Madisonville, Kentucky. Father was a farmer. There
were six children in our family. I was born October 14,
1858, in Tennessee.

In 1875 an uncle and I decided to come West. So
we boarded a steamboat at Memphis, Tennessee, for Cairo,
Illinois. Up the Mississippi we came and changed to a
train at Cairo for Dallas, Texas. From Dallas we came
in a covered wagon. As we drove toward the Territory we
met Sam Bass, an outlaw. The road was very muddy and we
were in ruts to the axle. We came face to face with Sam.
Neither of us knew him then. He was in ruts as deep as
we and neither he nor uncle could pull out of the road
without a lot of hard pulling. So they stopped their
teams facing each other and both sat there for some time.
Neither of them spoke. At last Sam crawled out of his

DAVIS, SAM H.

INTERVIEW.

#4641.

2

wagon and began gathering leaves and sticks. Uncle asked him what he was doing. He said, "I can't get by, so I'll just camp here". Uncle recognized him and needless to say pulled out of the road and drove around the other team and wagon in a hurry. We settled at Harney, which is now Woodville in the Chickasaw Nation. I ran a grocery store there in 1882 and 1883.

I moved to Price's Falls, south of the present site of Davis in 1885 and put in a store. I had many Indians as customers. They bought only one article at a time and paid for it. ~~Many times they shopped for their neighbors.~~ They carried their money in tobacco sacks and there was a sack for each person for whom they bought. They bought an article for a neighbor and paid for it out of the neighbor's money sack.

I moved my stock of general merchandise to Davis in 1886 and served as the first Santa Fe Agent for three years. The depot was in a box car and it was located just across the tracks from my store. I had all my

DAVIS, SAM H.

INTERVIEW.

#4641.

3

groceries hauled from Denison, Texas, with ox teams.

In 1891 there was an Indian Payment for the Chickasaws. The night before the payment Nelson Chigley, who was paymaster, came to me and asked me to get six thousand dollars in cash by the next day. There were no banks here so I went to the depot and wired the First National Bank at Gainesville to send the six thousand dollars by express that night. The next morning I was all ready to pay the money to the Indians as they presented their checks to be cashed. Nearly all of them took the money, went out in front of the store, counted

out the amount they wanted for immediate use and returned the balance to me to keep until they called for it. At the end of the day I had about four thousand dollars of that money back. I returned it and the checks to Gainesville by express.

One day a man came into the store and asked for change for a thousand dollar bill. This was the only one I had ever seen. I began to question him and found

DAVIS, SAM H.

INTERVIEW.

#4641.

4

out he was a cowman who had just returned from a trip over the Chisholm Trail to Kansas City with a bunch of cattle. He brought all the cash back in currency.

Cow ponies were our telephones in those days. That was our only method of getting word abroad for a doctor, or to a neighbor whom we wished to see. Before the Santa Fe built their road through here in 1886 the mail came on the stage from Caddo. This stage line ran from Fort Smith to all the Government forts in this part of the Territory and ended at Fort Cobb. They hauled both mail and passengers. It was very interesting to watch

them change horses at these stage stands, which were ten miles apart. The harness hung on a rack and the horses were driven under it. The harness was dropped onto their backs. There were four or six horses to a stage and when the harness dropped the buckles snapped together and the horses were put to the stage. This was all done in one minute.

People were very honest in those days. About the

DAVIS, SAM H.

INTERVIEW.

#4641.

5

only bill I ever lost, and I got that back, was to a man from Roff. I had a mortgage on all he had and he had paid that off. Then he asked me to let him have a saddle for his two children, a son and a daughter. He said he would return the following week and pay me. When he didn't come I began to investigate and I found out that he left for Arkansas the day after he bought the saddles. I wired to Fort Smith and in a day or so I had word from the sheriff that he had my man. It was rather a difficult trip to bring prisoners back so I told him if the man would pay for the saddles and pay him for his trouble they could turn him loose,

otherwise to keep him in jail until I arrived. But the man paid for everything and that settled the case.

I married Clara Taylor at Harney in 1882. We have two children.

My parents are buried at Davis.

I built the first steel bridge over the Washita River west of Davis on the road to Fort Arbuckle in 1893.

DAVIS, SAM H.

INTERVIEW.

#4641.

6

The town of Davis bears my name.