

DARRAH, J. S.

INTERVIEW

9767

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

DARRAH, J. S.

INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker's name Ida B. Lankford

This report made on (date) January 24, 1938

1. Name J. S. Darrah

2. Post Office Address Cordell, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) R. R. 3

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 1 Year 1865

5. Place of birth Sullivan County, Missouri

6. Name of Father Robert Darrah Place of birth Virginia

7. Name of Mother Nanca Bookmaster Place of birth Ohio

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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Ida B. Lankford
Investigator
January 24, 1938

Interview with J. S. Darrah
Cordell, Oklahoma

We came to Oklahoma from Sullivan County, Missouri.

We left there November 15, 1891, and landed in Washita County, December 15, 1891. We came in covered wagons and were one month on the way.

We filed on this place we are now living on, built a dugout and lived in it for five years. I broke out my land with a walking sod plow. I raised corn and kaffir corn. I didn't know how to raise cotton then as we were from the North. I would haul my corn one hundred miles and only get fifteen cents per bushel.

Our only water supply was a pond, and the cows, horses and wild animals drank out of it, but we were glad to get it. When we did dig wells, the water was so hard we couldn't use it.

The closest railroad we had was at El Reno. I would freight from El Reno. My wife and baby would stay at home and do the best they could; lots of times I would be gone ten days and longer. One time while freighting I was

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caught in a big rain on the Canadian River. The water got up in the wagon and the horses and I almost drowned.

Another time I was caught in a snow storm and a big blizzard and almost froze.

We made our bedsteads out of cottonwood poles; we sat on boxes and cooked on a fireplace. We didn't have anything but we wanted to hold our claim down.

The first school we had was in 1895, four years after we came here. The men got together and built a dug-out; we had a three months term. We had church in the same place and many times we would have from twenty to twenty-five people for dinner and the preacher came, also.

The way I got my wood, I would steal from the Indians and if they caught me I would have to pay for it. I would also burn cow chips with the wood. I would go to the Caddo country and steal cedar wood and make our posts.

We had lots of wild meats such as quail, prairie chickens, turkeys. I have killed tubs of quail and sold them by the dozen; we also would sell coons and how we did trap and hunt to make a little money! We would go to the

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Washita River to fish; we would break the ice and gig the fish out, then have a big fish fry; make black coffee and cornbread. We would stay night after night, we really had good times. Fishing and hunting were our sports.

I remember while on our way to Oklahoma, we came to a field of cotton and the little bushes were dark, the cotton had been picked, so I said to my wife, "What a large nursery and the little trees are so pretty." When we landed in Oklahoma the folks talked about raising cotton, so in 1893 I planted some and the neighbors had to show me how to plant it and also how to pick it.

After all the early days were good days. My wife and I are all alone, our children are all married. We are still on the farm that I filed on. I am not able to do any more work.