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Field Worker: Warren D. Morse  
April 16, 1937

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BIOGRAPHY OF: John Dodd,  
Ryan, Oklahoma

BORN: March 15, 1869, in  
Marshall, county, Tennessee

PARENTS: Billie Dodd, Tenn.

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I came to Oklahoma when Dad moved to Wise county, Texas.

I crossed the river north of Gainesville in a wagon.

We had to follow an old worn-out trail over the rough land and still rougher when we got to the mountains. There I had to hook both teams to one wagon and went right over the top. It took longer to get over the mountains, or almost as long as it did to drive from the river to the mountains.

At that time the ferries were made out of logs and were flat, raft-like, no motor-power or horse-power. We drove our teams on to the ferry and a man paddled behind canoe fashion, however, the Washita wasn't very wide at that place. I went on until I came to Pauls Valley, it was just a board town. I went out north and a little east of Pauls Valley and started a farm, though I had very little to farm with. I had to build a house, so I made it a half-dug-out, with cottonwood logs for the part that extended above the ground.

My father-in-law, Mr. Thompson, wanted me to go haul his cottonseed from Rosedale over across the Canadian River. He told me to be careful in crossing the river, as we had to ford it then. I drove down to the edge of the water. No one was there to help me across, as he had said there would be.

I guess I sat there two hours or more. I wasn't used to

muddy streams and in thought the river was up. Soon a man, Mr. T. M. Johnson, came riding up and asked me what the trouble was. I told him and he told me to follow him. I kept in sight of him, some times he would go down stream, then zig zag here and there. He explained to me that he had to do this to keep out of the holes, if you go into one of those you would bog down in quick sand and go under.

Another time two of us were driving some cattle across this place. It was the first time I tried crossing on a horse. The man told me to follow him. He thought I was close by. When I went into the water it was pretty deep and my head got to swimming. Well I could not follow him, I thought my horse was going away from him so I jerked the reins and got him in one of the pools. I went down clear to my shoulders, this man happened to look back and yelled to me to drop the reins and look up and the horse would bring me out. I did that and was saved.

A doctor drove his team in the river and lost buggy and team. The horses died, standing up just their heads showing.

I had three children, I wanted to put in school and as there was none in reach of me, I got some more people interested in building a school. We cut logs and took them to a near by saw mill, had them made into boards. Every one near told me I had better let them dry before I started building. These boards were made out of cottonwood. Well I did not listen when I should have. I went ahead and built the school house. After it was there a while the boards warped, shrunk and it was the worst looking thing you ever saw.

At that time we had to make our cotton planters. We took a keg, bored holes around the sides near the bottom, mounted this so it would

turn on a pivot and placed it on a sled. When the horse pulled the sled this keg turned over and over and wise, it was a very wasteful way but the seed was put in the ground. We did all our plowing with a double shovel and Georgia stock, all walking.

I remember the first cultivator I used. My father-in-law told me had had plowed all his corn with it and told me to take it over and plow mine. He said every thing was all set and all I had to do was start right in. Well I took it over. The darn thing completely covered one row or through of my corn. I was worried so was the team. I kept yelling at them I had decided if I ever got back to the other end I would go back to the double shovel. I was nearly to the end when I looked up and saw my neighbor sitting on his horse watching me. He hollered at me, "John do you need any help?" If you do not mind, I will show you some thing about that thing." He jumped off his horse and looked at the plows. He told me that they were set too deep. He set the left hand plow and drove the team about a hundred feet. This was throwing dirt to the corn very nice. He then set the right one like the left. He told me to tie the lines together and let them be loose around my waist and talk to the team quietly. I did and had no more trouble with the cultivator. Right then that man taught me some thing about plowing. It takes different setting of plows in different soil.

They did not have any suctions at the gins, we carried the cotton up to the stands in buckets. A man tramped the cotton in the press.