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

Field Worker's name Johnson H: HamptonThis report made on (date) May 13th 1937. 193  1. Name Mr. Norval R. Donica.2. Post Office Address Nola, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 6 Year 1866.5. Place of birth Grandly, Missouri6. Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth Missouri.

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 Four.

INTERVIEW WITH NORVAL R. DONICA.  
NOLA, OKLAHOMA

FIELD WORKER JOHNSON H. HAMPTON  
MAY 13, 1937

I was born at Grady, Missouri, on November 6, 1866. My father moved from there to Tablequah, Indian Territory, in 1884, where we lived there until the run was made in the Cherokee Strip. We made a run with the other people when the Cherokee Strip was opened for settlement. We had camped there for some time before the run was made just across the line. There were lots of people camped there to make the run. I don't think that there would have been enough land to go around if all had taken claims. There were about 60 of us who stayed together and camped together waiting to make the run. In our crowd there were two women that were going to make the run. Of course there were other women but they had husbands; however, these two were not married. People came in all kinds of wagons, buggies, carts, one horse buggies, and some came on bicycles. Some of them had milch cows pulling a wagon, some had oxen; in fact they came there in all kinds of conveyances that they could get.

The bunch I was with had their land already located and were just waiting for the time to make the run. The soldiers were guarding the line to see that no one took

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advantage of the others and to see that they did not get over the line. When the time came to make the run, there was a big gun- it must have been a cannon fired at twelve o'clock and the soldiers along the line all shot their guns. Then the race was on. We let the two women make the first start in order to give them an opportunity to get ahead; then we followed. It surely was a great sight. They were in all kind of shapes. They would run over one another if they did not get out of the way. It was very hard on the runners, for it was dry and no water was to be found on those hills, and it was hard to get any food stuff when we ran out of food. There were some creeks but they were claimed by some one and they would not let you have even a drink.

I remember that we had to pay as much as ten cents for a cup of water. The ones that had water would haul it around in barrels to sell, of course people just had to have the water and the ones that had water knew this, so they got just what they asked. The country was very unhealthy; there were lots of people that settled there died from one disease and another.

We traded our land that we had located and came to the Choctaw Nation. We located somewhere near Pawnee. I don't

remember just where it was. The land was pretty good around where we located but it was very unhealthy and we were hard up against it for food and other things that we had to have. That was the reason we moved from there and came to the Choctaw Nation, where we located up in mountains.

When we first landed in that part of the country; the country abounded with deer, turkeys and lots of fish in the river and some bear. The grass was just fine in those mountains. The whole country was a wild wilderness. Big pine trees grew there; in fact the mountains were covered with big heavy pines, white oaks, cedar trees, and every other kind of trees that a man could imagine. There were no white people in there when we came- they were all Indians- no postoffice; but after a while some white people moved in there and then we went to work and got a post office and named it Nola. Then after a while Nashoba got a postoffice about five or six miles from us so we had two post offices close together.

We farmed, as we were farmers. We opened up some land along the little creek bottoms and made good crops. It was surly fine country then. After a while I put up a small store and we farmed and ran a little grocery store. We had to go to Fort Smith to

get our supplies. When the Frisco Railroad went through, then we traded at Tushkahoma, a little town on the railroad about 25 miles from where we lived.

I lived among several tribes of Indians but mostly among the Choctaws, whom I can say are about the best Indians I lived among. I have never had any trouble with them. They always treated me just as though I were one of them. The only fights they would have would be among themselves. They would not bother a white man nor a white woman. They are good Indians to this day. I can say one thing, they are just as honest as the day is long. I have some experience with them for I traded with them in stock and in my grocery store. They bought stuff from me on credit and when pay day came they would come and pay up. If they were not able then they would come and tell me why they could not pay on the spot and I would give them a little more time,. They surly would come around and pay up. I have never lost anything on Indian yet. Of course they are peculiar people; if they think that you are trying to skin them then you have lost their trade. They do not get mad or any thing like that, but they just quit trading with you. I don't believe that there are any finer people than the Choctaw Indians.

My Father died and is buried at Nola, Oklahoma, where we have lived all these years.

My Mother has a walnut chest which I think is about 150 years old. It is worn and looks as though it is weather beaten, but it is as strong now as it ever was, . I have some little things that are sort of relics to me, a powder charger, a bullet mold, and some other things, and in particular I have a horse shoe hammer that was made by a blacksmith, and I am sure that it is about 100 years old.

We came into the Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, in a covered wagon, my father and his family. We lived in a log house. We had no furniture to speak of; just what we could get in the wagon is all we had. I now live about 35 miles northeast of Antlers, Oklahoma