

DUKE, CHARLIE SHERIDAN.

INTERVIEW

10365

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

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DUKE, CHARLIE SHERIDAN. INTERVIEW. 10365.

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt.

This report made on (date) March 17, 1938. 1938

1. Name Charlie Sheridan Duke.

2. Post Office Address Hobart, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 5th Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 22 Year 1869.

5. Place of birth Tipton County, Indiana.

6. Name of Father John Duke. Place of birth

7. Name of Mother Katie Eskew Duke. Place of birth

Other information about mother I know little about my

parents. My mother's parents reared me.

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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Ethel B. Tackitt,
Investigator,
March 17, 1938.

Interview With Charlie Sheridan Duke,
5th Street, Hobart, Oklahoma.

I was born in Tipton County, Indiana, March 22, 1869.

I know very little about my parents, as I was reared by my mother's parents, Grandfather and Grandmother Eskew. My grandfather's name was Preston Eskew and he was a farmer in Texas from my early memory.

I had an uncle, Will Eskew, who brought some stock from Texas to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Country when it opened in 1892. He got a claim and he wanted me to come up from Texas and take care of his horses and cows, for, after the Opening, stock was not allowed to run at large any more on account of their eating up the crops of the settlers, who were not able to buy barbed wire and fence their claims. The herd law prevailed and a good many people who had small bunches of cattle loose-herded them on the untaken land.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Country was opened by Run and there were many claims staked on which the person

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securing them never returned to file, or, in case they did file, they did not comply with the law in living on the land. The law provided that a person could file upon one hundred sixty acres. They then had to make certain improvements on the land and live upon it six months out of each year for five years. The filing fee was fifteen dollars.

While taking care of my uncle's stock, I lived with the Gerald Brothers, John and Enock, who were batching and each holding down a claim. We had a kind of half dugout in which we camped while they worked on their claims, plowing and planting some corn and cotton. Like all young fellows, we enjoyed the newness of the country and it made little difference to us that there were no improvements, that the grass was high and no roads from one place to another. We worked a little, hunted and fished as we pleased, and went to visit any new settlers who happened into the country.

The next year there was a claim left vacant that joined one of the Gerald Boys and I went to Cloud Chief, paid fifteen dollars and filed on my one hundred and sixty

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acres. Then I made a dugout in the side of a gully for this caused the rainfall to drain away from a dugout, and also made the front end better for a door than a dugout dug straight down in the ground, for that kind of a door could never be made to shed the water and not run it in on the dirt steps or the slant which was required to get down to the floor, as the sides of a dugout were always made deep enough in the ground to come well above a man's head, even if it had to be built up with logs, pickets or stones, depending upon which material was to be found in the country, as all lumber had to be hauled from Vernon, Texas, by wagon and team. There was no place nearer to get building material, even if the settlers had possessed money with which to buy. Very few had much more than their filing fee and perhaps a small amount, guarded with care, with which to purchase food in case of dire need.

My dugout was eight feet wide by ten feet long, with a door in the front and no windows, but a fireplace dug in the back end, a hole for the smoke to go up and built up with rocks and a mud chimney on top of the ground to make

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it draw. I cooked on this fireplace when I did not cook outdoors, and had a bedstead made of cottonwood poles on which I slept, when I did not sleep out of doors, which I usually did in Summertime.. I had several barbed wire spools which served as chairs, and my dishes were mostly tin cups and plates.

I plowed some of my land and planted corn and cotton, but there was not much market near and the roads were so bad hauling was difficult, but I proved up on my claim when my five years were out, and when I had been in the Cheyenne country six years, I got married.

I had my claim but that was about all and the country had settled up some. However, there was little in the way of comforts of life to be had. I hauled lumber and built a small house and we continued to try to make a living, but the hardships and privations were much harder on women and children in those early days than they were upon young fellows who did not care whether they had anything but a place to eat and sleep or not.

I owned my claim ten years then I got an offer of \$3,000.00 for it, and we accepted the money and went back East.

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In a few years I came back to Oklahoma and am living in Hobart, the county seat of Kiowa County.