

EDGMON, ALLEN D.

INTERVIEW 13218

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

EDGMON, ALLEN D. - INTERVIEW.

13218

Field Worker's name Jesse S. Bell

This report made on (date) March 16, 1938

1. Name Allen D. Edgmon

2. Post Office Address Westville, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Westville

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 30 Year 1850

5. Place of birth Rome County, Tennessee.

6. Name of Father William Edgmon Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Martha Detridge Place of birth Tennessee.

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 Five sheets.

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Bell, Jesse S. - Investigator.
Indian Pioneer History - S-149.
March 16, 1938.

Interview with Allen D. Edgmon.

I was born, of white parentage, in Rome County, Tennessee, October 30, 1850, and am now 87 years old. My parents were of a prominent family and operated a large plantation with many slaves. As I grew up during the Civil War, I did not have an opportunity to secure an education, but have been active in church work all of my life. I am a descendant of Irish, white Dutch, and French.

I made many pairs of shoes, tanning the leather to make them. We took the raw hide, getting the hair off with lime, and putting it in the tan bath with oak bark ooze, where we let it stay about twelve months.

Our farming consisted of raising wheat, corn, oats and flax. We raised flax to make our clothes. We wove and colored or dyed our clothes; we raised indigo to dye with, and also dyed with bark, blackberry root and red sumac tops. We used black walnut hulls to color wool with. Copperas and alum, to mix with dye, were gotten out of bluffs from rocks of limestone. Of course we wore home-made clothing.

We did our cooking at the fire-place or out of doors;

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baked our corn bread in skillet and lid and stewed other foods in dinner pots. We had wooden wash bowls and water bucket, and our spoons were made of cedar. We had a bread tray made of buckeye white wood.

When cultivating corn, we had long bull-tongue plows, and ran three to four times in one furrow. We had to thrash our wheat with billy clubs, on a floor, or ride a horse over it to tramp it up, and take a fan mill to blow the chaff out. Later came the thrashing machine, commonly known as the Ground hog Thrasher, operated by horse-power. The first double shovel I ever used was made of wood, with wooden beam.

We kept our fires burning all winter long as there were no matches in those days. In summer time, when no fire was needed only for cooking purpose, the women folks took large barks of wood and covered over the coals and put ashes over them for slow burning until needed. How we obtained or made fire: We first took flint rock and a pocket knife, poured some black powder on the ground and lay cotton by it, then struck flint for sparks on powder to set the fire.

When we were out of black powder we would take copperas string and turn the spinning wheel so fast it would set the copperas string and then get pine or paper to get our

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fire going.

We came from Tennessee to Arkansas, in an ox wagon, our journey lasting six weeks. We crossed the Tennessee River two times in flat boats and we crossed the Mississippi one time, below the mouth of the Ohio at Columbus, on a flat boat. The steam ferry boats were sunk after we crossed the Mississippi. We went seventy-five miles up the river to get across the Nigger Wolfe swamp, into Missouri, then cut across the corner of Missouri back into Arkansas. We had our house-hold goods in the wagon and cap-and-ball rifle, and muzzle-loading shot gun.

After we settled in this country there was plenty of wild game. We had our corn ground on water mills run by a fifty foot wheel and fifty foot fall. The burrs were made of French rock.

I have eight children living, my oldest child being sixty-five years old. I have lived to see the fifth generation. I have over one hundred grandchildren. My wife's maiden name was Susie Sparks. We were married in Newton County, Arkansas, some sixty-six years ago.

Susie Sparks was born in Rome County, Tennessee, October 26, 1853, and left Tennessee when she was six years

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old to move to Arkansas.

I have operated spinning wheels and looms. We used three treadles to make men's clothes, and for dress goods, I would weave 6 yards. I used four shuttles weaving plain clothes. I could weave ten yards a day with one shuttle.

We came to Cherokee County in Green Community, about 45 years ago, being the first white family to settle in that Indian Community.

My father was a Confederate soldier and served in the Civil War. He saw lots of real battle action, and was wounded at Chickamauga but died later. He is buried at Nashville, Tennessee.

Governor Chiggley of the Chickasaw Nation and I were hunting partners and hunted all over where Oklahoma City now stands. We once were attacked by Comanche Indians and Governor Chiggley killed one. He would take in every orphan child who came along, Indian and Whites and provide a good home for them.

I am a life-long Democrat.