

NABORS, T. M.

INTERVIEW

10103

1

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

NABORS, T. M.

INTERVIEW.

#10103

Field Worker's name John F. Dougherty

This report made on (date) February 28, 1938

1. Name T. M. Nabors

2. Post Office Address Hickory, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 1 Year 1882

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father Jack Nabors Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother Phronie Cane Nabors Place of birth Mississippi.

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 _____.

An Interview with T. M. Nabors, Hickory, Oklahoma.
By - John F. Dougherty, Investigator.
February 28, 1938.

My parents were Jack Nabors and Phronie Cane Nabors, both born in Mississippi. (Dates unknown). Father was a farmer and stockman. There were twelve children in our family. I was born in Mississippi, July 1, 1882, and we came to the Indian Territory in 1888, settling near Cameron in the Choctaw Nation, near Backbone Mountain. We got our mail at Cameron, but usually went to Fort Smith for our groceries. Parker Bend was just west of us. This was a very noted gambling den. Cattle which drifted in there from the mountains were stolen by the inhabitants.

The people in our community built a schoolhouse of logs, and it was soon burned. They built another and it went the way of the first. For several years they did without a school building, using a brush arbor instead.

Some of the marshals in this section were quite dishonest. When travelers would come through with a good team of mules or horses, they frequently slipped around behind their wagons, dropped a quart of whiskey in the rear of the vehicle, then arrested the newcomer for introducing whiskey.

into the Territory. The traveler was taken to Fort Smith where his wagon and team were confiscated and the marshals received their share of the money obtained from the sale of the team and wagon.

There was a toll gate on top of the Backbone Mountain. The Choctaw Indians had built a road across the mountain from Cameron to Bonanza, Arkansas, and worked it. That was the best road in that section of the Territory and there was no way to get across the mountain except via this road. The gate was on top of the mountain. The caretaker lived in a small log house at this gate. It was locked and there was no way to get through unless one paid toll. Wagons paid twenty-five cents and riders were charged fifteen cents.

The Indians in these mountains were very shy. They ran and hid like wild animals when anybody passed their houses.

When the Frisco Railroad was built in the eighties, bears and panthers were so numerous in the San Bois Mountains that the workers carried guns for protection while building the tunnel through the mountains south of Wilburton.

I knew a man who had worked with the railroad gang and he said that one day he was busy and happened to hear a thumping on the ground. On looking around he discovered a panther hitting the ground with his tail, preparatory to making a leap at him. He shot the animal just as it sprang toward him. They made holes in the rocks where they slept at night. Rattlesnakes were numerous also.

The story of how Ti received its name is interesting. This was a lumber camp at that time in the Choctaw Nation near Wilburton and they wanted a post office there, but they couldn't find a suitable name for it. Those they submitted to the Postal Department were usually names already in existence. One day the storekeeper found a letter addressed to Wilburton, Indian Territory. He looked at it for some time and wrote Ti, I. T., just reversing the initials of Indian Territory. He sent this to the Post Office Department and it was accepted. Thus Ti came to be a post office.

The only doctor near us was a Doctor Miller. He knew nothing about medicine when he came to the Choctaw

Nation from Arkansas. He had just married a Choctaw girl and when they arrived across the line he had only fifty cents. He decided to begin practicing medicine by experimenting on the sick Indians. He became very popular as a doctor and attained success. He was very efficient and grew to be a very wealthy man.

I have seen the Indians make spears for their arrow heads out of flint rock. They heated these rocks until they were almost red hot and touched them with a small straw which had been dipped in a clear liquid, which they called an acid. Each time the rock was touched, a small piece of it fell off, until there were several small holes on each side. They made short spears for killing small game, squirrels, rabbits, etc., and long spears for killing large game such as deer and hogs.

I saw the notorious Cherokee Bill hung at Fort Smith. Just before the execution his mother walked in with a half bushel of gold pieces and offered them to the officers if they would stay Bill's execution and set him free. They refused. Cherokee Bill stepped upon the scaffold and his life was ended.

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5

I married Callie Churchill in 1912 and we moved to
Pontotoc County in 1929.