

MURPHY, C. O.

INTERVIEW

13624

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MURPHY, C. O.

INTERVIEW  
BIOGRAPHY FORM

Form A-(S-149)

152246

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Eugene I. Murray

This report made on (date) April 9, 1938

1. Name Mr. C. O. Murphy

2. Post Office Address Ada, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 723 West 10th St.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 16 Year 1858

5. Place of birth Union, Franklin County Missouri

6. Name of Father Alek Murphy Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father Civil War Veteran (Confederate)

7. Name of Mother Eliza Joiner 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 5 sheets.

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Investigator  
Eugene V. Murray  
April 9, 1938

Interview with Charles O. Murphy,  
728 West 10th St.,  
Ada, Oklahoma

Texas , during the years of my boyhood and for many years afterwards, was considered by a great many people in the more northern and eastern states, a land of opportunity for the landless man. During this period of my life many people who were immigrating to Texas came through our community, a little village called Union, in Franklin County, Missouri. I soon got the "fever" too, and when I was twenty-one years old I started for Texas. This was in 1879. I went to Grayson County, Texas, where I had some friends and relatives. I worked here and there in Grayson County for ten years. During this time I heard a great deal of talk about the "Territory" through which I had passed when I came to Texas. It was said that there were millions of acres of rich land belonging to the "Injuns" "layin out" and unoccupied by anyone, which could be rented very easily on good terms. At this time I was "courtin" the present Mrs. Murphy. We talked about the possibilities of farming in the Territory and I decided to see for myself what the country was like from a settler's point of view. I tried to talk some of my friends

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into going with me, but they could not be induced to go as they were afraid of the "Injuns," so I loaded up my wagon with some bedding and farm tools and came by myself, in 1888. I traveled with another family for part of the way. I crossed the Red River at Brown's Ferry, south of Thackerville, then went on north of that village. I leased a farm here that year and made a good crop. Then I decided to go back to Texas and get my "girl," Miss Mary Poindexter. We were married in June, 1889.

In the fall, after the necessary preparations had been made, we left for the Territory to make our home there and have lived in Oklahoma since that time.

During my year at Thackerville I had learned that land could not be leased for longer than a year at a time in that community and as we did not like this we decided to settle somewhere else. I had heard quite a lot about good farming land around Springer so we soon decided to try that country first. Springer was just a good days drive of forty miles north of Thackerville. Shortly after reaching the town of Springer I met a Mr. Frank Fox, for whom the town of Fox was later named. Mr. Fox was a "galvanized" (intermarried Citizen) Indian who

had a lot of fine land most of which was "laying out," or had never been broken. I leased a hundred acres of very fine virgin upland from this man for a term of ten years.

In those days it was a common practice to pay the rent on raw land by making certain improvements on the land itself. Improved farms were generally rented by the "third and fourth" that is, a third of the corn and a fourth of the cotton raised on the place by the tenant, going to the owner. We non-citizens were required to pay a \$5.00 yearly fee to the Indian Government to farm in the "Nation" and, after doing this I set out to improve the ground which I had leased from Mr. Fox. My lease was for ten years, the agreement being that I was to build a small, livable house, dig a well and do some fencing, which I did. I built a two-room log house 16 X 16 feet square, with a side room of lumber.

In those days it was customary in the Chickasaw Nation to fence only the amount of land that was to be cultivated, leaving the rest in the open range, I fenced about thirty acres of my land. I roofed the house with post oak clapboards. We also had a wonderful spring at this place which furnished water for the stock. This was in the fall of the year. The follow-

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ing spring, I secured a contract to teach a school- the first school Springer ever had. I had done a little teaching before, in Texas, and for this country was "educated."

I hired a man to take care of the farm for me while I taught the school. This was a subscription school and the fee was \$1.50 per pupil per term. I had seventy-four the first year of the school and I received \$35.00 to \$45.00 and \$50.00 a month for teaching it. I lived on my farm and taught school one year then I sold my lease on the farm and went into the drug business in Springer. I had a partner in this business, a preacher, whose name I'll not call, if it's all the same to you. Well, this preacher fellow was a much better "skinner" than he was a preacher and he "skinned" me, his partner, more than he did even the customers. I stood it four years and at the end of that time I was "flat-broke", "busted" and bankrupt.

For the next seventeen years we moved to first one place then another, living at Ardmore, Oakland, Grantham, Roff, Stonewall and Jesse. During this time I farmed, ran some cattle on the range, hunted wolves, coon and foxes, traded

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horses and taught school. In 1911 I bought a farm near Stratford but never moved on to the place at all. I then began the operation of a wagonyard here in Ada on South Stockton Street and Mrs. Murphy operated the Farmers Hotel just across the street. I swapped my farm for my present residence and operated the wagonyard steadily for over twenty-two years until I was forced to retire because of age and bad health, in 1935. We are the parents of seven children and the oldest, a girl, was born while we were at Springer in 1893, and is now forty-five years old.