

NAIL, J. P.

INTERVIEW

8591

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

#3591

Field Worker's name Thad Smith, Jr.
Report made on (date) September 22, 1937

Name J. P. Nail
Post Office Address Chickasha, Oklahoma
Residence address (or location) 1516 South Shepard Street
DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 1 Year 1864
Place of birth Tennessee

Name of Father Abraham H. Nail Place of birth Tennessee
Other information about father Buried in Oklahoma
Name of Mother Matilda Robertson Place of birth Tennessee
Other information about mother Buried in Oklahoma

is or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and
y of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects
questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to
form. Number of sheets attached 6

I came to the Chickasaw Nation in 1834 with my father, when I was twenty years old. We came to the Chickasaw Nation from Texas.

We leased a farm from Clarence Colbert, a Chickasaw Indian, four miles west of Durant.

My father and I raised corn and cotton. The land was not very good, and we raised only a third of a bale of cotton to the acre. We ginned our cotton at Caddo and sold it for eight and ten cents per pound. Our corn made about thirty bushels to the acre, which we sold for twenty five cents per bushel.

My father, Abraham H. Nail, was a doctor, although he was not a licensed doctor. He treated a good many of our neighbors for common ailments.

When we first came to the Territory, there were lots of deer, wild turkey, prairie chickens, quails and wild hogs. The hogs were fattened in the fall on acorns. Anytime we wanted hog meat,

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we would go out with our guns and kill a hog.

Our house, as well as all others in the surrounding country, was made of logs. Although the logs were nice and straight and were laid close together the cracks between the logs were filled with clay mud. All of the houses had fireplaces. The most of them had rock chimneys.

My father and I lived close to a main traveled road, which led from Texas north and west. We kept a good many travelers over night. We sold these travelers corn for twenty-five cents per bushel and all of the hay they could carry tied with a rope, for ten cents.

There were a good many cattle and horse thieves living near Durant.

There was a court established at Paris, Texas, to take care of the lawbreakers in the Territory. There were sixteen men killed in our neighborhood.

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Sometimes a man would be called to the door at night and shot down before any words were exchanged.

The supposition in such cases was that the man who was killed knew something bad about the man who killed him and that the murderer was afraid that his victim would turn him over to the "law." Many men were shot for this reason. The nearest court was just across the line in Paris, Texas.

The Indians as I found them in the Chickasaw Nation were the best kind of people. They were all generous and upright citizens.

I farmed in the Chickasaw Nation until 1898, then I started peddling butter and eggs in Lehigh and Coalgate. The customary price of butter was twenty-five cents per pound and I usually got twenty-five cents a dozen for the eggs I sold. I gathered up the butter and eggs at small country stores at pretty cheap prices. I did all of my

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peddling with a wagon and team.

The water at Lehigh tasted awful.

There were three peddlers in the Chickasaw Nation, who were robbed and killed by outlaws, but I never was bothered.

There used to be lots of bald eagles in the Territory when I first came.

In 1901 I came to Chickasha which was a thriving little town and started a dairy with a small herd of scrub cows. I sold milk for five cents a quart.

In 1903, Dr. Penquite, Sam Taylor, W. L. Sawyer, and I made a hunting trip to the Kiamichi Mountains, where we killed deer and wild turkey. The gobblers would weigh about twenty pounds apiece. There was lots of game there, but we did not try to kill more than we could eat.

In the early days in case of sickness the neighbors did everything possible for the patient

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and his family.

After running my dairy for twelve years, I sold out to Dan Garland and returned to Texas, to stay a few years, later returning to Chickasha, where I have made my home since.