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Game--Cherokee Strip
Pawnees
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Mr. Grant Foreman,
Director S-149
Goldie Tuner--Field Worker.
4/ 27/ 37.

Interview with
Mr. Thomas Brown
317 Kansas St.
Pawnee, Oklahoma.

Mr. Brown was born in Kansas in 1856. He first came to Oklahoma about 1873 or 1874. He says:

I first came to Oklahoma on a hunting trip in what is now the Cherokee strip soon after the Indians were moved here. There was then a great deal of wild game here, deer, antelope, prairie chickens, and turkeys.

I had lived around the Indians all my life and have found them very interesting. I was living at Wichita when the Pawnees were moved there, preparatory to bringing them to Oklahoma. While they were in Wichita, each Indian family was given a team, wagon and plow. White people came with them down to the reservation. The government also established a grist mill close to the Pawnee Agency, out where the Fair grounds now are, to grind the grain they raised and brought there for flour and meal. The government also furnished the Indians three or four threshing machines with one white man for each, but the Indians had to do most of the work in the threshing. The Indians had to furnish most of their subsistence and broke out little patches called "squaw patches" on which they raised corn, wheat, squashes, etc. The government would furnish them a little flour if they couldn't raise enough to run them a year. When their farm work was finished, they would gather in camps for their religious dances. They often

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danced during a dry time for rain.

I started out in a covered wagon on the day of the run and when I got to Newkirk I was ahead of the train as were many others. The train started at the same place and time we did. It had about five coaches but trains didn't run so very fast in those days.

I first started to stake out a claim in the Arkansas river bottoms but when I went to put down my stake I almost ran it into a man lying in the tall grass. He was a sooner and had a gun. He told me in no uncertain language to move on and I did. I next came on over to Pawnee and settled on school land about four miles southeast of Pawnee. I built a frame house with lumber freighted there from Perry. There was lots of good land that was run over and left when the race was made. A week after the race I went over some good land north of the Arkansas river around Bitter Creek that had never been taken because the water was so bitter that neither people nor animals would drink it. It was later settled up and the people made cisterns to furnish their drinking water.

The Kit-Ka-Ha band of Pawnee Indians had their camp just west of my place and we could hear the screamings and goings on plainly from our house when they had their dances.

One evening just after the opening when the Indians had started one of their ceremonial dances, one of my neighbors came over very much excited and told me that the Indians were all painted up over at the camp and were going on the war-path and that we all must get away. I was used to their dances though

for I had often been around them in Kansas and told my neighbor there was nothing to fear, that they would do us no harm. He went away only half believing me and kept constant watch to see if the Indians were coming.

There were no fences in early days and horses often strayed away, sometimes going miles and often never being found by their owners. When they were put out to graze they were often hobbled by their front feet together so they couldn't get very far away.