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INDEX CARDS

Altus  
Saloons  
Comanche Indians

BLACK, JOHN W. INTERVIEW.

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Jasper H. Mead, Interviewer  
Indian-Pioneer History  
July 19, 1937

An interview with John W. Black  
915 South Sixth, Chickasha, Okla.

My name is John W. Black. I was born in  
Rus County, Texas, March 8, 1892. This was forty-  
five years ago. I came to Oklahoma in September  
of 1907, the year of Statehood.

My parents are J. C. Black, age 68, born  
in Texas; and my mother is Ellen Richards, age 64,  
born in Alabama.

The first place I landed was at Altus,  
Oklahoma. There were about one thousand people  
there. All the buildings in Altus were built out  
of wood and none of the buildings were over one story  
high. It was a real little cow town. Everybody  
there was on the hustle and bustle, working or doing  
something.

On what we called Main Street every other  
door was a saloon. You have seen in picture shows  
where the cowboys would come into a saloon and every-  
body get drunk, then some stranger would come in and  
the fight would start. The saloon would get torn up

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and the fixtures stacked. Well, I have seen that in Altus.

There was very little farming around Altus at this time. Most of the work around there consisted of ranch work, which paid on an average of thirty dollars per month, and board. There was some of as fine grazing land around Altus as there was in the country any where.

Altus was built on what I would call the plains. The land is level and you can see for twenty-five miles in any direction you want to look. I worked on what was called the Mule Shoe Ranch. Its headquarters were at Blair, ten miles north of Altus. There was one building in Blair which was a two-story building. It was a general merchandise store and a hotel combined. I helped to round-up the last bunch of cattle on the Mule Shoe Ranch which were shipped to Kansas City, Missouri. There were about twenty-five hundred head of them.

The water supply around Altus came from dug wells. Some of them were cased up with brick and some were left plain. The water was extra good because

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they had to go pretty deep to strike it.

At that time, in 1907, Altus had one railroad. This was the Frisco, and they hauled worlds of cattle out of that country.

There were a few Comanche Indians around Altus, but the most of the Indians were located in Kiowa County, east of Altus.

After Statehood, in 1907, most of the work around there consisted of breaking out land, building fences and planting alfalfa. Altus has made a real little town now and is very good cotton country.