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The Story of Arthur J. Smith as given by his daughter, Mrs. Ruby Boggs, South P St., Muskogee, to Miss Ella M. Robinson, Field research worker. April 24, 1937.

My parents were Arthur J. and Rhoda Smith. My father was familiarly known as A. J. to his friends. We lived in a dugout in western Kansas (Edwards County) near the small town Knisley.

As building material was scarce and hard to get, it was necessary for many people to live in dugouts. Ours was builded into a side of a hill, with the front made of lumber. It was a large room 16 x 18 feet, perfectly comfortable and absolutely secure from the wind storm which was so prevalent in that section of the country. We had plenty of light as we had nice glass windows on the front. That was the home in which I was born and in which my parents lived with their nine children. My father was considered a progressive, well-to-do citizen. In connection with his farming activities he owned a small herd of fine cattle and numerous horses.

When the Cherokee Strip was thrown open for white settlement, he made the "run". I was four years old at the time and as I had been my father's almost constant companion since babyhood, he insisted on taking me with him on this trip. My mother was very apprehensive regarding the matter but his will prevailed. We went to the little

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town of Kéowa and spent the night. The next morning everyone was lined up on the border waiting for the signal at 12:00 O'Clock. By the firing of guns we started on the wild drive. My father was driving a good team hitched to a spring wagon. I stood in front and held on to the dashboard. After traveling furiously for sometime, he sighted a spot that he liked. He jumped from the wagon and I handed him the stakes and hammer and he drove the stakes into the ground while I held the horses. I was wearing a little dark blue calico dress and if I was wearing a bonnet, it must have been sewed on as that was the only way in which my mother succeeded in making me wear one.

~~We~~ then went to the nearest land office where my father went through all the necessary preliminaries contingent to such matters as filing on a claim.

My older brother and sister also made the run and secured a claim several miles from my father's. We then returned to Kansas where my father completed arrangements for moving his family, household goods, and stock to the new location. He erected a two-room plank house in which we lived for three years. His intentions were to establish a dairy on a large scale and ^{he} had taken his dairy herd with him. But after some three years time, he decided to change locations and secure

larger acreage.

At that time, in 1894, the Santa Fe Railroad was building through that section of the country and had reached the site on which the town of Alva now stands. He sold his holdings to the railroad company realizing a good price and the Santa Fe Depot now stands on the exact spot where he drove the stake on that memorable day.

After disposing of his holdings, he came East to the Indian Territory proper and settled temporarily in the Choska bottom, across the river north of Haskell. His cattle had been raised on the Kansas prairie and knew nothing about acorns. When he went out one morning and found twelve of his fine cows dead from eating acorns, he thought it was time to move. It was quite a loss as he had refused a \$100.00 a head for the cows. From the proceeds of the sale of his property at Alva, he bought and improved the Three-Bar (≡≡) Ranch, located near the Concharty mountains, thirty-five miles northwest of Muskogee. The Ranch took its name from three lone blackjack oak trees that stood nearby, like lone sentinels. The noted Will Rogers was employed by my father as foreman of the Ranch for sometime. He was young and energetic and very proficient in his work and made many

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friends that he retained to the end of his life.

There was always something doing when he was around and there were no dull moments. My father maintained a payroll for thirty ranch hands, with many more during the busy seasons, spring and fall roundup and branding season. He made two trips annually to the Rio Grande Valley and they were always driven through. Several cowboys would accompany him on the trips with their camping outfits, chuck wagons and trained dogs. A well trained dog could do the work of several men as they would go over and under the herd if they saw one straying from the line. As night came on the men would circle the herd and hold them in one spot until the cattle were settled for the night, always selecting an open space as cattle never slept in the timber. Two or three men would be detailed to keep watch during the night in case some nervous cow had insomnia and decided to take a walk.

The Ranch was enclosed with a three strand wire fence and as I had learned to ride when I was almost a baby, I began to help herd the cattle at the age of ten. When I was in my early teens, I began riding the "line" for my father. I rode eighty miles a day for many days at a time

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forty miles around the line and forty miles back. To those who know nothing of horseback riding that seems incredible, but with a swiftly moving horse who traveled with such ease, it was no harder than sitting in a rocking chair. The object of these long rides was to inspect the fences to see that no cattle "rustlers" had pulled up the posts and flattened the wire down and driven out unbranded stock during the night. The cattle business was at its height then. It was always an interesting time in the spring and fall when the different outfits started off with their chuck wagons and camping equipment. Always with the shepherd dogs trotting quietly until they were called into action when they displayed as it seemed real human intelligence. My early training and outdoor life had given me a strong body and a fearless mind. I learned to rope and throw a yearling as well as any man. I always wore high boots which my father had made to order. As the dogs were valuable so were the cow ponies, so well trained that it seemed as tho they were able to read a cow's mind. While she was thinking of breaking from the line the pony had already sensed it and was ready to dart after her. If the rider was not alert, he would find himself sitting on the ground.

My father shipped cattle twice a year. They were always driven to the Kansas City market. We had a large comfortable

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ten-room frame house in which the family lived, with bunk houses to accommodate all the hands nearby. It was a long way from the one-room dugout in Kansas into which I was born to this modern home. Another baby girl had been added to the family making ten children. My older brothers and sisters had married in the meantime and had homes of their own. As there were no schools in that entire section of the country and as there were several children of school age in our family, my father was much concerned over the situation. He conceived the idea of starting a school and had the necessary material assembled to erect a substantial arbor, where a school was started for the summer months. It was in one of his pastures, and Mrs. N. B. Moore taught the school. The first summer, everyone paid tuition for their children and that went to pay the teacher's salary. As winter came on, they secured an abandoned corn crib and converted it into a school room. As Mrs. Moore's duties would not allow her to continue teaching, she secured the services of a good woman to teach. A fine brick school building now stands where the arbor stood. As we had had no church or Sunday School, Mrs. Moore always conducted a Sunday school. In 1902, when my little sister, who had been born at this place died at the age of three, and no minister was available, Mrs. Moore

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conducted the funeral services. The little girl was buried on the top of a high hill near the house, a lone little grave. In my childish mind I thought they had put her up there so she would be nearer heaven.

We had many fullblood Creek Indian neighbors that I visited often and was always given Sofka to eat, which I liked very much. The Buck Gang, a notorious band of outlaws, were at the height of their career at that time, during the '90's. Just the name of them struck terror to the hearts of women and children through the country as they were left alone so much. They came to our home one day and raided the house, taking what food and anything else they wanted. Had not my sister's husband been there at the time, noone knows what might have happened. They were a bad mixture of Indian and negro blood and very dangerous characters. My father bought all his supplies at Muskogee, principally from Patterson Mercantile Company and Turner Hardware Company. It was a long trip over rough country roads and several wagons, sometimes were sent on one trip. There was no end of wild game and our table was well supplied in seasons with wild turkey, prairie chicken, and quail. It was a wholesome, free, happy life, that has passed from civilization and will never return. Father disposed of the ranch in 1900 owing

to ill health, died in 1903 and is buried in Greenhill cemetery at Muskogee. I was married to J. S. Ayers in 1910. After his death I lived in Tulsa and operated the Baltimore Hotel for several years, when I was married to Mr. Boggs. E. W. Marland, our present governor, was one of our regular guests; also, Henry Sinclair always reserved an apartment when he expected to visit Tulsa on business. I have made my home in Muskogee continuously since 1929.