

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

DELK, W. E.

INTERVIEW

9639

Field Worker's name Jasper H. MeadThis report made on (date) January 12 1938

1. Name W. E. Delk
2. Post Office Address Chickasha, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) R. I
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 11 Year 1868
5. Place of birth Arkansas
6. Name of Father George W. Delk Place of birth Tennessee
Other information about father died at the age of 50
7. Name of Mother Martha Jane Allbritten Place of birth Tennessee
Other information about mother died at the age of 60

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 3.

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Jasper H. Mead,
Investigator,
January 12, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. W. E. Delk,
R. I, Chickasha, Oklahoma.

I was born November 11, 1866, in Arkansas, sixty-nine years ago. I came to the Indian Territory when I was twenty years old and the first place I landed was east of where Duncan is now. I lived there until 1892 when the Cheyenne and Arapaho country was opened up. I took a claim about fifty miles west out by Mountain View and I stayed there seven years and when Mountain View was made a town I sold out my claim and moved three west of Chickasha.

Chickasha then was just a very small place and was my headquarters where I did my trading. When I first came to Chickasha there was one small store and post office combined, located about two miles north from where Chickasha is now; it was called Penn See and was almost on the bank of the Washita River.

The Rock Island Railroad was built through in the winter of 1889 and Chickasha was started from a railroad camp.

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Corn was the principal crop around Chickasha and 1908 and 1912 were called the two corn years, every field of corn made from fifty to seventy-five bushels to the acre.

I have seen so many wild ducks light on these cornfields they could hide the sun and you could hear them quack all night long. There was plenty of wild deer, antelope, turkey and prairie chickens; I have seen as high as a hundred deer in one bunch.

The Chickasha City Hall was built in 1908 and it sits on the southeast corner of the swinging Circle Ranch; there used to be a wood yard where it is now.

When I was on my claim I would use two yoke of steers to a plow to "bust out" my sod. One year when I was on my place I raised a bumper crop of turnips so I hooked up my steers to the wagon and loaded it down with turnips and started to Fort Sill; when I got there I started to sell my turnips but a soldier tapped me on the shoulder and told me I would have to get a permit, so I went to the quartermaster and got my permit and sold all my turnips for a dollar per bushel.

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The main water supply around Chickasha in early days came from dug wells. The Rock Island shops that used to be in Chickasha were built in 1891, and they tried to dig down past the hard water and when they did they struck so much oil and gas they had to stop; later, after Chickasha got a water system they used city water.

I have seen Chickasha grow from nothing to what it is now; there used to be a lake across Main Street and the first post office once sat upon stilts over this lake.

I have lived in and around Chickasha for forty-nine years and have been a farmer practically all my life.