

Interview with Mrs. Alice Parker
Sulphur, Oklahoma.
By John F. Dougherty, Field Worker.

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LIFE OF A PIONEER WOMAN.

My father was James Smith. He was born June 8, 1833, near Athens, Tennessee. My mother was Melinda Armstrong Smith. She was born near Athens, Tennessee, September 30, 1838. Father was a farmer and stockman. They moved to Montague, Texas, and I was born there, May 18, 1869. There were six children. We came to Ardmore in January, 1888, by train.

Ardmore was a very small village then, having only two stores and a large tent for a hotel.

We lived in a three room log house, with dirt floors, shutters for windows, and board doors. We got our water out of a spring.

We raised corn and cotton and did our trading at Ardmore. I didn't like this new country at all.

I married a full blood Chickasaw by the name of Wesley Parker in 1892. We were married

under State Law in 1892, and again under Indian Law in 1897. My husband was an interpreter for Jonas Wolf, Governor of the Chickasaws. He served as Representative and Senator and President over the Senate. He went to Washington with Governor Guy in 1895. He was interpreter in the Land Office at Tishomingo, in 1903, and 1904 during the Land Allotment.

Those were perilous times and we were in constant danger of losing our lives. Many times have I gone to the door in answer to a call and found a bunch of Indians who were political enemies of my husband, ready to shoot him on sight. I would tell them he was in Tishomingo, when he'd be there at home.

There were two political parties, namely, the Byrd Party and the Full Blood Party. My husband belonged to the Full Blood Party. The man who could hold the most votes was most likely to be murdered. They waylaid them many times. Often they went with arms and made the

elected officers get out, and put their men in their places. Bill Byrd was elected Governor, but Mosely was put in and served.

My husband was a nephew of Aunt Hettie Harris, wife of Governor Harris. We lived with her for awhile after we were married. She was a very proud woman. She was an herb Doctor, and doctored many sick members of her tribe.

My husband was the man who was responsible for the New Born Baby Law being put through the Chickasaw Legislature. Governor Douglas H. Johnson vetoed it, but Mr. Parker mustered enough votes to pass it, and it became a law without the Governor's signature.

Indians were very honest and truthful. They borrowed money from each other and promised to pay on a certain day. It was always paid on the said day or an explanation was made. They had no bonds nor mortgages. Their word was their bond.

If they committed a crime and were sentenced to be shot they always appeared on the

date set and received their punishment. One Indian was seen plowing his Tom Fuller patch the morning before he was to be executed in the afternoon. Somebody said: "Why do you plow your Tom Fuller patch when you are going to be shot this afternoon?" He answered: "My family will need this when I'm gone."

On Statehood day, September, 1907, the school children had a parade. They put the Indian children in front to lead the parade. My child was one of the leaders. One of my older children came home very disgusted at her younger brother, because he was yelling for statehood and giving up his home land.

My parents are buried at Drake, ten miles south of Sulphur, and my husband is buried at Sulphur. I am the mother of five children, three of whom are living.
