

PIERCE, RICHARD:

INTERVIEW

12956

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

Field Worker's name W. J. B. Bigby

This report made on (date) February 11. 1938

1. Name Richard Pierce.

2. Post Office Address Westville, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 29 Year 1866

5. Place of birth Goingsnake District, Cherokee Nation.

6. Name of Father John Pierce Place of birth Georgia

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Sarah Crittenden Place of birth Georgia.

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly this form. Number of sheets attached 3.

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W. J. B. Bigby  
Investigator  
February 11, 1938.

Interview with Richard Pierce,  
Westville, Oklahoma.

I was born in the Old Goingsnake District, Cherokee Nation, March 29, 1866. My father was John Pierce, a Cherokee, who came from Georgia. My mother was Sarah Crittenden, also an Old Settler Cherokee. My parents were small children when they came here in 1830. After their marriage they settled on a farm about a mile northwest of Westville and raised a large family.

Early Life.

Most of my early life was spent on the farm that my father operated in an area now called Westville Prairie. At that time this was a very fertile valley that had been settled by the leading families of the Old Settler Cherokees. Among those settling at this place were the Buffingtons, Albertys, Phillips, Palones, Crittendens and the Whitmires.

The Pierce family were well-to-do people who possessed considerable property. They were industrious people and were also born politicians.

School.

The earliest school established for the Cherokee children

on this prairie was the Prairie Grove School, located on the southeast edge of the prairie. This was about one mile southeast of the town of Westville. The first teacher at this place was named Trobridge, a permitted white man.

#### Church.

The earliest church in this part of the Cherokee Nation, located on Green Branch, was established about 1878 by some of the Methodist Missionaries but most of the people attended the meetings of the Circuit Riders who came through preaching at the Prairie Grove Schoolhouse. Reverend Ewing was a noted preacher of this type. There never was a Cherokee church in this community. Baptist Mission was not a Cherokee church, being for both the Cherokees and the whites.

#### Ferries

There were only two ferries in the Goingsnake District. One was located at Mitchell's Mill on the Illinois River but I do not know the name of the operator. The other was located east of Watts on the Arkansas Line.

#### Roads.

The only road that was well-known in this part of the country was what was called the Military Road between Fort

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Gibson and Fayetteville which came through the prairie on which we lived that would be about a mile north of the present town of Westville. This was used by the soldiers stationed at Fort Gibson. Later, this same road was used as a stage route between the same towns. I do not know the owner of this stage route but the stopping point was at Andy Akins' Blacksmith Shop. Andy Akins was a noted Cherokee of his time who had served as a blacksmith during the Civil War at Fort Gibson.

#### Secret Societies.

I joined the Kee-Too-Wah Society, joined at the age of fifteen years, at Walnut Hollow about ten miles northwest of Westville. Wolfe Coon was the president of this convention.