

POWELL, SHEA

INTERVIEW

#1323

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

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INTERVIEW.

#1323.

Field Worker's name Thad Smith, Jr.

This report made on (date) April 22, 1937

1. Name Shea Powell,

2. Post Office Address Route 2, Chickasha,

3. Residence address (or location) 2 miles southwest of Chickasha.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 9 Year 1872.

5. Place of birth Missouri.

6. Name of Father Jack Powell Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father Buried in Missouri.

7. Name of Mother Annie Turner Place of birth Missouri

Other information about mother Buried in Missouri.

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 Four

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Thad Smith, Jr.
Field Worker.
April 22, 1937.

Interview with Shea Powell,
2 Miles S.W. of Chickasha, Route 2.

I came to Oklahoma in the spring of 1898 and landed in Chickasha which was a small town, yet there was lots of business and activity in and near the town.

I got a job as night clerk in the Grand Avenue Hotel working for Gilbert Turner. My pay on that job to begin with was twelve dollars and fifty cents a month with room and board.

The schools in Chickasha at that time were called subscription schools. Each school child's parent paid so much a month to the school teacher for the privilege of sending the child to school.

Upon my arrival in Chickasha S. D. Fait was the Presbyterian Minister, Father Isadore the Catholic Priest and Eugene Hamilton the Episcopal Minister.

In 1900 the Grand Avenue Hotel was sold and I went to work for Frank Carter at the Early Hotel and my salary was raised to eighteen dollars a month, room and board.

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Jim Tucker was a United States deputy marshal before the opening of the Caddo, Kiowa and Comanche country but after the opening in 1901 he built and operated a saloon in that country. It was called the Line House as it was on the line between the Kiowa and Comanche country and the Chickasaw country; it was located about three miles west of Chickasha.

There were a good many Indians who would come to Chickasha occasionally to attend fairs. In reality there was nothing at these fairs but horse racing, steer roping and riding, just a kind of rodeo. No farm products at all would be shown but sometimes there would be some nice cattle and horses shown.

In 1901 just before time to register for the drawing in the Caddo, Kiowa and Comanche country, I quit my job as hotel clerk and went to El Reno where I got a job at the Creamery Cafe. This cafe was open day and night, and just as busy as could be for about two weeks. People came

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from all over the United States. The trains, both freight and passenger, would be loaded down when they got in. There also were many different nationalities there to register and a good many negroes drew claims.

When the big crowd was in El Reno the saloons stayed open all night and gambling devices of all descriptions were set up in the middle of the street. The traffic drove to either side of these gambling places.

I registered for the drawing but did not draw a claim so I then went to Lawton where lots were being auctioned to the highest bidder, thinking I might buy a lot but the lots sold from one hundred and fifty dollars to two thousand dollars each which I thought too high.

There was no railroad there yet but it was on its way. Men were working on the road bed.

There were a good many tents in the town and in one of them was a saloon where quart bottles of beer sold for fifty cents each. That was rather high but the ice to cool the beer had been freighted from Chickasha forty miles away.

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After staying in Lawton a few days I returned to Chickasha where I got my old job as hotel night clerk back again.

The most of our customers were cowmen and drummers. There were several livery stables in town and hacks always met the trains to bring fares to town. It was not very far but awfully muddy in wet weather.