

SACRAS, JOHN B. (MRS.) . INTERVIEW.

#4983

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

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Field Worker's name Thad Smith, Jr.This report made on (date) July 20, 19371. Name Mrs. John B. Sacras2. Post Office Address Chickasha, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) Route 34. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 20 Year 18665. Place of birth Missouri6. Name of Father Henry Stearman Place of birth OhioOther information about father Buried in Oklahoma7. Name of Mother Elizabeth Spurgia Place of birth TennesseeOther information about mother Buried in Oklahoma

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 10

Thad Smith Jr.
Field Worker
July 20, 1937

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Interview with Mrs. John B. Sacras
Route 3, Chickasha, Okla.
Born September 20, 1866
Father-Henry Stearman.
Mother-Elizabeth Spurgin

In the summer of 1891, my father and mother, two brothers and I drove into the Indian Territory, from Missouri. We had two covered wagons, each drawn by a pair of Missouri mules.

We crossed the Arkansas River on a ferry, just below where the Arkansas and Verdigris rivers flow together. I remember that at the time, the water of the Verdigris was pretty and clear, while the Arkansas was muddy and dirty. We wondered why there was so much difference. Neither stream was on the rise.

We traveled a plain road leading southwest. The grass was good, and we always tried to camp near a spring or creek at night, so that we would have water handy. We took our time traveling, because we really didn't know where we were going. We continued traveling southwest and forded the south Canadian River, north of Minco. We drove south on the main traveled road, and crossed the

Washita River one and a half miles east of Chickasha on a toll bridge, owned by Mr. C. L. Campbell. My father decided we had come far enough, so we camped on George Merchant's farm until after my father and brothers had gathered about one hundred and fifty acres of corn for Mr. Merchant.

The next year my father farmed the land where Chickasha now is. That same year the Rock Island Railroad was built into Chickasha and the track was laid through my father's corn field. The railroad company paid him for destroying the corn.

Before the railroad was built we got our groceries at Pensee, a little store on the south side of the Washita River, about three miles northwest of the present Chickasha. Mr. Jacob Descombus ran the store and post office. Later he was the first postmaster of Chickasha.

My brothers made the run into the Cherokee strip, but failed to get a claim.

On the fourth day of July, 1892, we had a big basket dinner on Line Creek, on the edge of town. A big platform had been built for those who danced,

and the dance lasted all day long, and until late that night. The Square Dance was the most popular. Some of the foremost men made speeches, and told us what a wonderful country we were living in, and the advantages that the new railroad had given us.

There were no full-blood Indians around Chickasha, but I had several friends who were part Indian. Mrs. Jim Speed was one of them. She was one-half Chickasaw. I went with her to Anadarko, one time, to an Indian dance. There were several thousand Indians there, and they had many different kinds of dances. The dance lasted for three or four days.

In December, 1892, I was married to John B. Sacras. He was employed as a cowboy, by Buck Sparks and Florence Hall. They paid him \$75.00 dollars a month, as he was in charge of several men, who worked on the range, with a Chuck wagon. I stayed at the ranch headquarters while my husband was working. Sometimes he would be gone from home two or three weeks at a time.

At the time we were married most of the citizens of Chickasha lived in tents, and one grocery store owned by

Will and Con Sneed, was in a big tent, until a frame building was built, into which they moved.

The first Church in Chickasha was a little frame building; Rev. E. E. Hamilton, a Presbyterian, was the minister.

There were lots of wild turkeys and deer in the Kiowa and Comanche country. In the summer my husband killed lots of young turkeys, which I fried. In the fall he killed both turkeys and deer.

There were lots of dewberries and blackberries and plums, in most every little bunch of timber. We gathered them in the fall and I made them into jelly.