

POWELL, ADDIE SMITH. INTERVIEW 9564 345

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Form A-(S-149)

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

Field Worker's name Ethel E. Tackitt

This report made on (date) December 21, 1937

1. Name Addie Smith Powell

2. Post Office Address 919 South Washington Street, Hobart,

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

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 14 Year 1876

5. Place of birth Birmingham, Alabama.

6. Name of Father John Smith Place of birth Virginia

Other information about father Confederate Soldier

7. Name of Mother Martha Burson Smith Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about mother Brave pioneer.

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 5.

Ethel B. Tackitt  
Investigator  
December 21, 1937

Interview with Mrs. Addie Smith,  
Hobart, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

I was born at Birmingham, Alabama, August 14, 1876. My father, John Smith, was a native of Virginia and my mother, Martha Burson Smith, was born in Mississippi.

Our family moved to Arkansas when I was quite small and lived near Fort Smith until 1884, then we moved into the Indian Territory and Father received permission from Chris Cain to use all the land he wanted in the vicinity of Casher Prairie. The village was then called Hogtown and was located between the present towns of Keota and Star in Haskell County. That was before the time of counties or towns either, in that part of the Indian Territory.

There were practically no white settlers near and the country was in the wild. The timber was high and thick, there were no roads except trails through the woods. Wild turkey and deer were numerous and hogs ran at large. Meat was to be had simply by killing wild game.

My parents moved in a covered wagon and brought along a Georgia-Stock plow; one horse drew the plow; Father also brought some cattle and hogs. We farmed and Father raised stock as well.

He made a good living and always had money. He was like most men of that day, he would not put his money in a bank as he thought it was not safe.

Father went hunting quite frequently as all the men of the country did. They would often go, several together, and stay out all night to bring in their game. He considered the men friends and they were both Indians and white men.

After we had lived at Casher for about three years, Father and Mother decided to take our family back to our old home in Arkansas, and while there Father went to a little store and purchased some things. He took out his money to pay the bill and exposed a \$100.00; of this he thought nothing but present at the time were two fellows with whom he was in the habit of hunting, over in the Indian Territory, of the names of Silas Harge and Counsel. He never thought of fearing them and took no pains to conceal his money when he left the place. When our visit was over we returned to our home in the Indian Territory and shortly after, one Sunday evening, Father with a young man of the name of Taylor were seated on the perch of our log house, while Mother and we children were inside fixing supper. Four men rode up to the rail fence around the house and Father saw that two of them were

Silas Harge and Counsel, so he called to them to get down and come in and they got off their horses and came to the porch and told Father to throw up his hands. He thought yet that they were joking and laughed, but one of the number drew a gun and they made it quite clear that it was not in fun. While these two men were going through Father's pockets, the other one had his gun on Taylor Mincy and the third one came into the kitchen and began to eat everything he could get hold of in a hurry. Then he began to search the trunks and boxes, picking up all the loose money Mother had in them and sticking things in his pockets. While he was at this Mother went to the door over which the Winchester was always kept and took it down, but before she could get it leveled on him, he saw her and making a grab he got hold of the gun and shoved her back and at last in the struggle took the gun from her.

After taking all the money Father had in his pockets, and all they could find about the house and all the food they could find, they lined us all up and marched us out into the woods and we thought that they were going to kill us, but about a half mile from the house they stopped us and said for Father not to make any trouble about what they had done and dashed off into the woods.

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We did not know what to expect and they had taken all Father's guns but he was not a person to be frightened by them. Mother took us children back to the house and Father went to tell his friends that we had been robbed. The men from all directions gathered and they formed a posse and started after these four white men. They found some of the guns where they had been thrown away and the robbers made for the state line of Arkansas. Here they continued their depredations, robbing, killing and at one place they burned a church. At last those who were not killed were captured and Father was called to identify them. All court proceedings were then held at Fort Smith and as Mother and we children could not be left alone, we had to go along with Father in a covered wagon over the unworked roads, time after time for more than a year. Several days were required to make the trip and we always took a camp out-fit, camping over night along the way.

People always camped near one another in those days and on a number of these trips we camped near the noted Belle Starr and her company, for she always had a case in Court at Fort Smith. I remember her quite well. She usually wore a waist and skirt, a man's hat and a cartridge belt with pistols buckled around her waist. I also remember her daughter, Pearl; these people were always quiet and nice when

near us and never molested us in any way. We would never see them when we reached Fort Smith, only on the way to and from Fort Smith. We were friendly but they attended to their own business and we to ours. People did not meddle in the affairs of other people in those days.

That part of the country did not settle up very fast for the reason that white people could not own the land and it was held in large tracts and many white people did not get on very well with the Indians, so could not stay, but my people never had any trouble with the Indians and we continued to live there until I grew up and was married. Then my husband and I moved West as parts of the Indian Territory were opened for settlement, and when the Kiowa Country opened in 1901 we lived in Washita County and later moved to Kiowa County where we live yet in Hobart, the county seat, and where we conduct a grocery business. I have lived in Oklahoma for fifty-three years and with my people, feel that we have done our part in building the good state.