

SHIRES, JINK

INTERVIEW

#9389

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

SHIRES JINK

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Field Worker's name Augusta H. CusterThis report made on (date) December 9, 1937

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1. Name Jink Shires
2. Post Office Address Geary, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) R. R. 1
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 3 Year 1881
5. Place of birth Missouri

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6. Name of Father John P. Shires Place of birth Tennessee
Other information about father Pioneer and farmer.
7. Name of Mother Nancy Summers Shires Place of birth Tennessee
Other information about mother _____

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 _____

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Augusta H. Custer,
Investigator,
December 8, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. Jink Shires,
R. 1, Geary, Oklahoma.

I am living on a rented place west of Geary; I have never owned a place of my own. I worked for big cattlemen most of my life, but have farmed for myself for the past ten years. I have a wife and five children and am a well respected citizen of this community.

My father moved his family from Missouri to Texas when I was four years old in 1885. We lived in that State until 1896. We then came into the Indian Territory and stayed in the Chickasaw Nation until 1917, when I came up into Caddo County and worked for cattlemen by the name of John Bowls and Ed Johns who ran a big herd of cattle.

When we were living fifty-five miles north and east of Ardmore on the tributaries of the Blue River I spent my time working for cattlemen. I never had any trouble because I was not looking for trouble. When anyone wanted trouble he did not have to wait long before his wish was gratified. But almost every man attended to his

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own business and there was no trouble. But if anyone tried to take care of his neighbor's business then he found out that he had attempted too much.

I remember a man who came down into that part of the country and tried to christianize the whole country. He found out that he had undertaken too much and he was found dead. No one seemed to know who he was nor what had happened to him and no one made too many inquiries.

There were many stray horses which came into that part of the country; they just strayed there; no one owned them and they belonged to anyone who could corral them and put brands on them. The settlers did not want these horses running over their fields and eating their crops so they took care of them. Some called this "rustling" but the settlers had to look out for themselves.

The Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians were not bad to steal horses or cattle. Indians in this part of the State did not hesitate to kill a beef when they needed meat. One time a man named Walk George took eighty-seven head of horses to Arkansas and sold them. He

said he didn't and others said he did. But one man's word was just as good as another's in those days and he got by with it.

Those times were great. We did not have much money but we did not need much. There was no place to spend it. Our hogs ran out in the woods all the year around. They fattened on the acorns and pecans. Part of the time corn would sell for 10 cents a bushel. We would gather up the hogs we intended to butcher and feed them 30 cents worth of corn and they would make good lard and bacon.

There was lots of game. Turkey, quail ran as high as sixty to seventy in a covey. But when a hunter is allowed to kill every quail in the covey it is no wonder that they were thinned out in a few years. I never killed a deer or an antelope although I have seen plenty of them.

Indian Legends.

The Choctaw had two and sometimes three wives but the Chickasaws did not practise polygamy that I ever know of; the Chickasaws were more like the white folk.

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They had a big powwow once in awhile and would have some missionary to talk with them. Everyone of them paid the utmost attention to the speaker. Nothing would distract them from their attitude of attention. They always had many dogs and these dogs would like to sneak into the arbor or tent wherever the meeting was being held. There was always a "Dog Pelter," selected to keep the dogs out of the meeting and if one slipped in he would go after it and perhaps give the dog an awful beating or kicking before the dog would leave; but no one of the Indians paid the slightest attention to the commotion but just tried to listen to the speaker.

The Choctaws held a meeting one time to cure a man who was quite sick. They had the medicine pot hung and the herbs in the pot and kept a fire under the pot. There was a post set in the ground and the post was about three feet high and on the top was placed a small piece of cloth. This was to call attention to the fact that no one was to pass between the Medicine Man and the Medicine pot. To see

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that this did not happen a man stood guard at the post with a big black snake whip and woe be unto the dog, man or child who tried to get by.

This eating was kept up for many hours; it began at daylight and after sundown a brave came from somewhere I never know where, ran down to the fire seized the pot as he went by and just kept on running out into the darkness, with that hot pot of boiling liquid. How far he went or where I have no idea. But he went toward the East.

Almost anywhere you can see small pens built up of logs usually two logs high; it looks like someone had started to build a pig pen. But this is really a place where they put a large pan or pot of food and as many as can sit around on the logs, eating from the pot with a spoon.

One time I had gone to a big powwow given by the Choctaws and they had a big pile of jerked beef placed inside of a small fence. An old Indian took off his moccasins and got in there with his feet bare and the Indians stood around the pen. He reached down and

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gave each one a handful of jerked beef, walking around on the meat and as he circled the pen he gave it out to those standing on the outside. He gave us white men some crackers and canned food.

The Cheyennes and Arapaho Indians will eat beef that has been killed in any way except by lightning. I had a steer that was killed by drinking some of the dip liquid from the vat into which he had been plunged to exterminate the Texas ticks.

The Cheyennes and Arapahoes were extremely delighted to skin the animal and give me the hide in exchange for the meat.

Amos Buck was a negro cook who went with Kit Carson on many of his scouting expeditions in the West. Amos lived in Geary a few years but is now dead. He said that many buffalo on the prairies died from a mouth disease similar to the foot and mouth disease so common a few years ago. The tongues of the buffalo would swell and turn black.

The Choctaws and Chickasaws liked to have the white people come to their gatherings but they did not

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like to have them stay long. They do not appreciate it when the whites crowd into their circles which they consider sacred.

We lived on Frank Bird's place northeast of Ardmore, at the big spring which to-day is the source of the city water supply of Ada.