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Field Worker: Lenna L. Rushing
April 14, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mr. Ben Smith
Indian name (Je-re-que)
Full blood Sac and Fox Indian
Residence 2 1/2 miles west of Shawrock
Address Avery, Oklahoma

BORN Oklahora
1879

PARENTS Ma-re-ka-hon, father, born in Kansas.

My father is Ma-re-ka-hon. When he was living he was very prominent in the ceremonial and tribal affairs of the Sac and Foxes. Our family belongs to the Deer clan. They came to Oklahoma from Kansas just before the allotment of land on our reservation, and soon afterwards I was born.

When I was small, game was plentiful in the reservation. It was not uncommon to see an antelope just ahead of you while you were riding along in the woods. Wild turkeys and prairie chickens were in abundance also. It was easy to run down prairie chickens. When one flew up, you could watch where they hit and ride over there. They would probably fly a short distance here and then start running. The horse could easily overtake it, and then all you had to do was to knock it in the head.

I remember once I herded the Cimarron in flood time. I was with a group of men who were driving a herd of horses to their home. All the men got off their horses, and drove their own float into the water, holding on to the bridles on the up stream side. That was to keep from becoming entangled with the harness should the horse roll over. Then the men and horses went across the rest of

the herd followed, and upon reaching the other side they started grazing just as if nothing had happened. We made camp there for

the rest of the day and night so as to dry out our provisions.

We also had done some trading in the Osage country, and some of the broadcloth had gotten wet. I forded the Cimarron due south of Yale at a big river bend.

While I was still a very small boy, there was a council at Okmulgee. Our tribe sent representatives, and there were also representatives from the Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Seminoles, Osages and several other tribes. The purpose of the council was peace with the government. They promised to let us alone "as long as the water runs and grass grows." That has not been true. Now we are much poorer than we were then, and our land, much of it,

has been taken away from us.

In those days parties of Sac and Foxes frequently made trips up into the Ponca and Osage country. While there they would make friends with the Indians they took a liking to. There would be a powwow lasting four days. The last day was give-away day.

A horse was given to the one you wished to be a friend to. This meant that you were the same as a brother to them. Even though you were of different tribes. The next year they in turn gave

you something.

At the Sac and Fox Agency I remember Whistler's store down at the corner. Their house was up just in front of the jail house on the agency grounds.

I was a member of the Medicine Lodge.