

SMITH, DIXIE.

INTERVIEW

4613

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

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Field Worker's name Maurice H. Anderson.

This report made on (date) June 25, 1937. 193

1. Name Dixie Smith.

2. Post Office Address wynnewood, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Two miles Northeast of wynnewood.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1860.

5. Place of birth Chickasaw Nation, Indian territory.

6. Name of Father Bonnie Smith. Place of birth Mississippi.

Other information about father Deceased.

7. Name of Mother Nancy Roob. Place of birth Choctaw Nation.

Other information about mother Deceased.

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 7.

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Maurice R. Anderson,
Field Worker.
June 25, 1937.

An Interview With Mr. Dixie Smith,
Wynnewood, Oklahoma.

I was born at a place near where Durant is now and I located in the Chickasaw Nation in 1860. My father was owned by Mr. Jim Colbert who was a Chickasaw. My mother was owned by Serena Hoob, a Choctaw. My parents both died when I was one year old, according to my grandfather on my father's side.

My first remembrance of things was in 1865 right after the War.

My grandfather and grandmother stayed on this big farm and farmed for themselves until I was eight years old. I remember one morning we all loaded into one wagon, my grandparents and two other families named Harper and Allen. We all left this big farm in one wagon working four oxen. We camped about a mile south from a log store called Cherokee Town, located on the Washita River in the Chickasaw Nation. We camped by a big spring and my grandfather and Mr. Harper and Mr. Allen went to hauling logs to build houses with and in about ten days they had three log houses built with dirt

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floors, they covered these log houses with logs first, then they took dirt and put on top of the logs. There were several big springs within two miles around and there were about three to four hundred Comanche and Kiowa Indians camped at these springs and there was one log store at Cherokee town owned by John Sherley; this store was called a trading post for the people who lived around here.

The first year I was here I only saw one white man. There were several negroes living around on the prairie, but most of the people whom I saw were Indians and before I found out what kind of Indians they were I called them the blanket Indians, they always wore blankets around them, and had on beaded moccasins. There were many Cherokees living around Cherokee town, who were lighter in color than the Comanches and Kiowas.

According to Mr. Sherley, Cherokee town was named for the Cherokee Indians who didn't want to fight and took refuge here on the Washita River where John Sherley built the first store.

This store was at Cherokee town before we came; it was an old store and from the looks of the logs I would say that

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it was about fifteen years old when I came here in the latter part of 1868.

There was a Government man who issued meat and other things to the Cherokee, Comanche and Kiowa Indians at Cherokee town when I came here. My grandmother was part Chickasaw and I could speak the Chickasaw language. I would go to the Comanche camp and try to talk to the Comanches, but I couldn't understand their language; they talked with their hands quite a bit.

I have cooked meat over the same fire with the Comanches; they would have long sticks sharpened at one end, and they would put these sticks through pieces of the meat and hold them over the fire until the meat got hot enough for the blood to ooze out, then they would eat it.

I would roast my piece of meat until it was done.

Roasting and cooking outside the house was not new to me as my grandmother did all our cooking out in the yard over a home-made fire place.

My grandfather dug out a small pit and walled it up with clay and this is what my grandmother used for a stove for a long time. Grandfather did ~~some~~ farming; he had about three

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acres of corn and the second year we lived here he put in some wheat. The nearest mill was at Cyrus Harris' place at old Mill Creek about thirty miles from here. Mr. Harris also owned a wheat grinder.

In the winter time Grandfather and I would hunt; we would kill coon and deer and take their hides to Denison, Texas; and we would take deer hams too; we sold deer hams for 25 cents each and thought that was a good price. The reason my grandfather would take our furs to Denison, Texas, was so that he could get a keg of whiskey.

We could have sold our furs at Caddo, but this was in the Indian Territory and there was no whiskey there. We had to watch out for the United States marshal when we started back home from Denison; Grandfather would put the keg of whiskey in the bottom of the wagon, and stack what groceries and things we had bought on top of it.

We were stopped by the United States Marshals several times but they never searched the wagon; they would say, "Have you got any 'likker' with you negro?" and Grandfather shake his head and the marshals would would go on and we wouldn't be stopped any more on that trip.

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The first freight wagon came from Caddo to Fort Sill in 1871. There were two wagons and two white men and they were driving four yoke of oxen and they came within about fifty yards of our house. I don't know what they were hauling, but they had both wagons loaded and in about two weeks they came back by and from that time on every now and then there would be a wagon train sometimes with five or six wagons in a line, and in about four months after this first wagon went by our house, one day a stage coach came by which had four horses hooked to it and the driver was sitting up on top. And they carried the baggage on top just like the busses do today. I went to school at Fort Arbuckle for two years, 1874 and 1875, the Government had a mission school there and I boarded there. I don't know whether my grandfather had to pay for me going to school or not.

I hauled freight from Caddo to Fort Sill in 1876. I drove five yoke ^{of} steers and the wagon train I was with had twenty wagons in it.

Mr. John Batchels had the contract from the Government to carry the mail on his stage. I have seen Mr. Noah Lael drive up and down this stage line in his buggy, shoeing horses,

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and before he died he was the richest man in this part of the country; he worked hard and he was a good manager. He married the daughter of ex-Governor Cyrus Harris. I helped Mr. Bill Guy haul freight for two years. I drove one wagon and Mr. Guy drove the other wagon, later he was made Governor of the Chickasaw Nation.

Mr. Guy used to tell me jokes and sing songs around our camp fire at night while we were on one of these drives.

I knew Frank and Jesse James. They were at one time working with the Oklahoma Territory freight outfit and one day while I was at Cherokee town, I heard the United States Marshal was looking for them and the next time the Oklahoma Territory outfit came by Frank and Jesse James were not with it; they had left this part of the country.

I helped lay the railroad from the place where it crossed Rush Creek near Pauls Valley to Purcell. The crew working north beat the crew working South to Purcell by the length of two rails. I was standing there when the big railway officials came up in their carriage driving four white horses and watched them drive the silver spike. This was on the fourth day of May, 1887.

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The next day I came back home and went to fencing up land around here and building log houses on this land. I wrote to some of my friends in Louisiana and had them come out here and farm for me. At that time you owned all the land you could fence. In 1895 Zach Allen and I built a school for negroes; it was a boarding school in a two story building with a basement and it cost us \$3,000.00.

We got four white women to take charge of it and it was called Bethesda Mission.

I now live within one mile of the place where my grandfather settled when we came here; the old stage line is still visible in places and it used to pass within about a hundred yards of the house where I now live, which is about two miles northeast of Wynnewood.

At one time I was worth \$100,000.00, but today I live off of the old age pension check and whatever money I can make farming.