

SMALLWOOD, W. M.

INTERVIEW

#5921

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Johnson H. HamptonThis report made on (date) May 21st. 1937

1. Name W. M. Smallwood
2. Post Office Address Cloudy, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) _____
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 14 Year 1883
5. Place of birth Near Nelson, Oklahoma.

6. Name of Father Martin Smallwood Place of birth Near Nelson
Other information about father _____
7. Name of Mother Tinnie Smallwood Place of birth Near Nelson
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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Interview with W. M. Smallwood
Cloudy, Oklahoma.

I was born in what was then Yamichi County, Choctaw Nation, on the 14th day of April, 1883.

My father's name was Martin Smallwood and my mother's name was Tinnie Smallwood. My grandparents were Narcissus and William Smallwood. They came over from Mississippi and located near Old Doaksville. They then moved to where Nelson post office is now located. My father and mother were born there, and reared in the same locality, and of course I was born there. We lived on the edge of the prairie. The land was good black land where they located, about the best that could be found in this part of the country.

My father did not hold any office in the Choctaw Nation that I know of but my uncle, Ben Smallwood, was elected as Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation. I am unable to say just what year he was elected to that office; he held it one term.

My grandfather was in the Civil War and served all during the war. He told of the hardships they underwent, but we all know about them so there is no need of my telling you

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about that. He joined the Southern Army and of course I am with the Democratic party for that reason.

I did not see any of those war dances nor the scalp dances that were among the full bloods.

My father was three-eighths Indian and my mother was a mixed blood Indian, so I am not a full blood Indian. I can't speak the Choctaw language although I was raised among the Indians. I never learned to speak the language.

My father had lots of cattle, hogs and ponies; they ran out on the range. At that time there were no wire fences; the country was an open country and stock went anywhere they wanted to. The grass was as high as a man's head when the man was on a pony. The country was just as fine as could be; fine land and grass. We had a pretty good farm, where we raised all the corn we needed.

There were lots of deer and turkeys and the creeks were full of fish and there were plenty of squirrels in the woods, so we did not want for any meat. All we had to do was to get out and kill anything we wanted to eat and catch all the fish we wanted.

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There were not many Indians in the country where I was reared and these would be pretty well scattered, maybe there would be a house say about five or six miles apart. There were no white men at all then, but they finally got to coming in and pretty soon we had a good many white people among us. The white men put up wire fences, and before long the wild game disappeared.

There was no market for our stock, cows would sell for about five or six dollars apiece. The hogs sold according to age; year old sold for one dollar apiece, and on up that way. We had no sale for ponies at all, every Indian in the country raised ponies so it was nearly impossible to sell them. Finally the price of stock went up and while it was up a little we sold out what we had and bought some more cattle and horses and bred them up. We had some good stock after we bred them up, and of course got a good price for them.

We sure used to have some fine stock. When allotment came I had to sell everything I had for I had no place to put them. I was just like all other Indians, most of whom used to have cattle, hogs and ponies, but after the allotment when everyone selected their land, they did not get

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enough to run their stock on so they all sold out. Now very few have any stock at all and they couldn't if they wanted to, for there is no room for them now.

We lived in Kiamichi County and in Apuckshunnubbee District. The District Court ground was between the two Boggy's, Clear Boggy and Muddy Boggy. Just before statehood the court house was moved to Mayhew, Indian Territory, and the court ground remained there until statehood. They had a jail at this place but I don't think that they ever used it. It was a pretty good jail but there was no use for it.

The county court ground was located south of where I lived. They met on the first Monday of every month. It was just like a Justice of the Peace office. They would bind the fellow who violated the law over to the District Court, and of course he would have to appear at the next session of the District Court. If he was convicted he would get his thirty-nine lashes on the bareback.

We used to have Lighthorsemen who were appointed by the district chiefs. We had three district chiefs who were elected by the voters of each district. Each chief had the authority to appoint his Lighthorsemen. They would appoint

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in each county, and those appointed served during the term of the district chiefs.

My mother had two spinning wheels, a loom and a wheels. She would make cloth for dresses and also made pants and socks and mittens for us children. She would sell the cloth she made to people who wanted it. She would dye the cloth. I don't know what she used in dying it, but she sure could dye it just like store bought goods.

I went to Spencer Academy, which school was kept up by the Choctaw Government. It was a school for Indian boys. None but boys went in to this school. It was a good school. When I went to this school a man by the name of Caldwell was superintendent. I just went one term, did not learn much while there.

I used to attend the Indian meetings. They would have those big meetings every three months and I think that everybody went to them. There would be several campers who would feed the people who came to attend the meeting. People were well taken care of when they would come.

I have seen several Indian ball games but I never did play in the game. The older Indians would play and would

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not let us boys play. They would tell us that we might get hurt during the game. The only ball game I played was baseball. I could play that pretty well.

I now live about thirty-five miles east of Antlers, Oklahoma.

Note: Little or no change is made in the wording of Johnson Hampton's manuscripts since he expresses himself in typical Indian fashion. ED.