

SIPES, HATTIE

INTERVIEW

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

Field Worker's name Johnson H. Hampton

This report made on (date) August 17 1937

1. Name Mrs. Hattie Sipes

2. Post Office Address Antlers

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 27 Year 1896

5. Place of birth Arkansas

6. Name of Father H. F. Brown Place of birth Arkansas

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Mrs. Brown Place of birth Arkansas

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 _____

Johnson H. Hampton,
Interviewer,
August 17, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. Hattie Sipes
Antlers, Oklahoma.

I was born in Arkansas on the 27th day of September 1896. My father H. F. Brown and my mother moved to Stonewall, when I was about four years old.

When we got located there we rented some land from an Indian woman named Yakatubbee. She was a widow and I think she was a Chickasaw Indian. We lived on her place and rented land from her for two or three years; we rented land from several Indians and leased some land from them that we farmed. We lived in a box house when we first located in this country. The reason we moved to this country was that Father had an idea that it afforded better opportunities for a man who wanted to make something for himself and his family, and another reason was that some of our kinfolks had already moved here and lived in that part of the country, so we came over from Arkansas on the train. We did not have any furniture when we located near Stonewall; we had to buy all of our furniture after we got located.

On the farm we raised corn and cotton and anything we wanted to raise.

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The country was fresh and the land so we did not have any trouble in raising what we needed on the farm. The first time I ever saw an Indian was when we moved to that part of the country. I had read of Indians and had heard them talked about so I was afraid the first time I saw one, but they did not bother us at all and my scare of them died down after I got acquainted with them.

Father raised a good many cattle, hogs and had a few ponies; the ponies^{ran} out on the range; the grass was good out on the range so we did not have to feed the ponies much during the winter.

When we first got located we traded at Coalgate and at Lehigh; in both of those towns coal was mined; they were small towns but we could get what we wanted in the way of eats, those two small towns are on the branch of the M. K. & T. that runs from Atoka to Oklahoma City.

Father made lots of money here and while he did not save anything he had a good living. I think that he fulfilled his expectation about making money and a good living when he left Arkansas and moved to this country; it was a good country at that time for any one who would try to get along with the Indians.

When we first moved to this country, there were lots

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of wild game, deer and turkey and the creeks were full of fish and in fact there were all kinds of wild game here; if any one wanted deer to eat, all he had to do was to get out and kill one and turkey, too, and if he wanted fish he would go down to the creek and get all he wanted in a little while.

My first experience with Indian doctors was once when a little girl got sick, the folks sent and got this Indian doctor. He came over and then the folks notified the other Indians to come over and this doctor got some roots and herbs and put them into a pot and boiled down the mixture until it looked like it would hold about sixty gallons of water; he boiled this down, and the Indians all got together and drank this stuff, whatever it was and danced all night. It seemed to me/they got drunk from drinking this stuff that was in the pot and it was a curiosity to me to see them in that state, I guess it must have been a part of their ceremony; that was the first time I ever saw that kind of thing pulled off by the Indians. I do not remember but I think the girl died. It surely did look funny to me to see that girl lying there and those Indians around her.

Another experience I had with Indians after that was that I had a little brother who was the only white baby around

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there so the Indians got crazy over him and would come to our home to get a look at him, and sometimes they would take him away from our house and take him to their houses and hide him from us. We sometimes had to threaten them with the law before they would give him back. I do not think that they wanted to steal him but were just playing a prank on us for they surely were crazy over him. After this baby got pretty good size, they would come and take him with them and feed him pashofa and corn bread. They made this bread by putting corn in a mortar and beating it until it was made into meal; then they would cook this meal and give it to him. Sometimes they would make him sick.

I went to school at Owl Creek for some time. There was a school house by that name, and there were Indian children there. They went to the same school where I attended; we would have a fight once in a while but that could not be avoided. After I got about grown I used to teach Sunday School; I had about fifty Indian children in my class and I taught them to sing the English songs which they learned and they surely could sing. I took those children to several singing conventions where they won several white ribbons; they were all good singers. I surely did help those Indians and I liked all of them and they all liked me.

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We have lived among Indians ever since we moved here; we have lived among the Chickasaws and the Choctaws; we have found them to be the best people that any one would want to live with; we never had any trouble with any one of them; they were all our friends and they are today. Father traded with them; he rented from ^{them} and leased land from them yet we never did have any trouble of any kind with them. There is ^{about} one thing/an Indian, if he is your friend he is your friend but if you do anything to offend an Indian and he becomes your enemy he will be an enemy to you as long as he lives.

I saw an Indian ball game once where they played ball and fought. They did not kill anyone but they surely did have the fight. I have been to the Indian camp meetings; they would treat you the best they could and feed you while there; they surely would see that you got something to eat while attending one of their meetings.

My father died last year. My mother is living. My father was buried in the cemetery at Antlers. We are all living in Antlers, now.