

SMITH, JOHN

INTERVIEW

10836

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

SMITH, JOHN

INTERVIEW

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Field Worker's name Ophelia D. Vestal

This report made on (date) May 4, 1938

1. Name Mr. John Smith

2. Post Office Address Lawton, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Route 3

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 1 Year 1880

5. Place of birth What is now Oklahoma.

6. Name of Father \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

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 2

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Ophelia D. Vestal,  
Investigator,  
May 4, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. John Smith,  
R. 3, Lawton, Oklahoma.

I was born in what is now Oklahoma, in the eastern part, June 1, 1880. When I was four years old my mother died and my father moved back to mother's folks home in Texas. When I was about eleven or twelve years old, a good sized boy for my age, I moved to some other relative near Red River.

Near the river was located little stores, a grist mill, and small cotton gin, occasionally, As a barefoot boy going to the store for my aunt I had a pretty good time.

I remember going over to the river and seeing a ferry boat cross. The Indians in the territory would bring snake roots, black root and herbs they dug from the woods, bundle it in large bale-like shapes, crossing on the ferry,

~~they take it to the little store and trade with the store~~  
keeper for sugar and fire water. The fire water as the Indians called liquor, was put up in cans labeled with fruit labels. When they traded out all they wanted to, the

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storekeeper would pay them a few cents a pound, then the black root and snake root was hauled in wagons with ox teams to Paris, Texas, getting as high as twenty-five cents a pound. These herbs were sent back east and medicine made of them. The Indians made some medicine of the herbs too, but I never learned just how it was made. I have been to Indian meetings that were called "Tom Fuller" medicine meetings. They beat corn up like corn chow, spoke it, and after a day or two drank the water.

Some Indians came from the Territory into Texas and picked cotton. The Indian squaw would tie her new born baby, maybe only a few hours old, onto a tree limb and let it swing to and fro by the wind for hours and hours at a time. The Indian babies were never known to cry. At the present time, I don't believe Indian children cry as other children do.

I have heard long years ago, the Indians would meet in camp where one had passed away, all Indians dancing in a circle and singing, while one big chief sat near the head of the dead Indian and mourned.