

SMITH, ISADORE nee LABADIE

INTERVIEW

#12235

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

SMITH, ISADORE NEE LABADIE INTERVIEW 12235

Field worker's name Minnie Lee Burns

This report made on (date) November 22 1937

This legend was secured from (name) Mrs. Isadore Smith

Address Commerce, Oklahoma c/o General Delivery

This person is (male or female) White, Neuro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe Piankashaw

Origin and history of legend or story from memory

Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 8

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Nannie Lee Burns,
Investigator,
November 24, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. Isadore Labadie Smith,
Commerce, Oklahoma.

Other Days

My grandfather was Peter Labadie of French descent and he was born in the State of New York.

My grandmother was one of the few Full Bloods of the Piankashaws who were born in that state and she was among the number of the tribe when they were confederated with the Miamis in Ohio and came with the tribe from Ohio to eastern Kansas and later to the land purchased by Chief Richardville of the Miamis for those of the tribes that he represented. He purchased sufficient land for each member to have two hundred acres in the Peoria Nation. However, all of the Indians living in Kansas did not come to the land here as some of them liked their homes there and would not leave and those who did come, did not come at one time but came with a few families or a group of friends and relatives at a time and in this way, they were coming over a period of several years.

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My father was Charlie Labadie, born in 1853 in Kansas, I think.

My mother was Susan Bigleg, a Full Blood, but I know nothing of her life as she died when I was born and I was taken and reared by my grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Labadie.

My father married again and I have one half brother, Roy, and one half sister, Edna Moore.

I was born in the Indian Territory and am now past sixty years old. Indians don't like to tell their age.

Girlhood Days

Before Grandpa chose his home at where North Miami now stands, he lived near Peoria on what is now called the Old Skye Place. Here we did not have as nice a house as he built when we moved. The home near Peoria was a log one, small but comfortable and I started to school at the old Peoria School House which I attended for some time but was sent from there to Haskell and later to Carlisle where I remained for three years without coming home. The climate did not agree with me but I liked it and was afraid to come home.

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Life Around Us

Then the Quapaws lived north of us, between us and the Kansas line. There were not many of them here then and those who did stay had a hard time to live as they had not been taught to farm and had nothing to farm with, besides the greater part of their nation was a grass covered prairie. They would lease this to the Kansas cattlemen for ten cents per acre. It was not long before the cattle that they would bring in here began to die with the Texas fever and this killed many cattle belonging to those who lived here.

We did not have roads in those days and when we started anywhere, we just headed the way we wanted to go until it crossed or came to another trail going the way that we were going. We have started to Baxter Springs in the wagon and maybe a Texas steer with long horns would follow us right behind the wagon for miles.

The outside was not fenced. We fenced our lots and fields and this left the cattle free to feed on the outside range. Parents could not let their children go

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very far from home alone and it was not safe to be
afoot. So after we were larger we went horseback or
our parents took us with the entire family in the
wagon.

When I was young three different tribes of
Indians were close to us.

The Modocs

I remember the Modocs who were brought here
from Oregon and were settled on the Modoc Reserve.
They were a peaceable, thrifty tribe and tried so hard
to adapt themselves to their new surroundings and to
learn the ways of those about them. They would come
to the school house and come in and sit for hours and
not say a word, just watch and listen.

They had a farmer to teach them to farm and they
all worked, even the women, but the climate here did
not agree with them and so many of them died the first
winter they were here that it was very discouraging to
them and they must have been homesick. Later many of
the older ones did return to their relatives in Oregon.

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I am told that when they came here they did not have any English names and they were given names by the Missionaries who worked among them. Many of the names were suggested by Emeline Tuttle, assisted no doubt by her husband Asa.

Looking at their allotment map one finds such names as; Scar-Face Charlie, U.S. Grant, Myra Grant, Jennie Hubbard, Charlie Toil, Jerry Hubbard, Richard Hubbard, Mary Princess, Robin Hood, Mary Modoc, Sam Ball, Lee George, Asa Tuttle and whole families are designated under the surname of Hubbard, Pleasant, Hood, Charlie, Clinton, Lawyer, Tuttle, Kisk, Clinton, Denny, Stanley, Grant, etc.

They seemed eager to send their children to the Quapaw Mission School where Asa and Emeline Tuttle were in charge at that time and would often walk over to the school and stay around there listening to the teaching and preaching held in connection with the school.

Poncas and Nez Perces

I don't know anything about them except as I have

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heard the others talk about them. The Nez Ponces were peaceable and friendly and were not so closely watched and could come to the house and could trade something that the Government had given them and that they did not want to take home, chocolate, etc. Then, too, you could find them on Spring River fishing. But the Ponces were watched more closely by the soldiers and were not allowed the freedom that the others had. They were brought here as prisoners of war and kept here a part of the second year before they were moved to their present home. So we did not get to know very much about them as they did not have very much liberty.

Grandfather was a little, jolly man and liked to see those around him have a good time. When he chose the land for his family where North Miami is now, ^{he} built a large six-room frame house and arranged one large room on the south side for dances. Four sets could dance there at once. He charged a dollar a couple and then at midnight he would give a big supper in the large dining room for the dancers and would serve a general supper which would take days to prepare. All kinds of

meat were served, cake, pies, etc. These dances drew large crowds from Baxter Springs, Chetopa, Neosho, Seneca and even from Vinita. He did not allow any drinking but did have a stand in one of the rooms where the folks could buy cigars, ice-cream, lemonade and candy.

Then, too, he made a race track close, where at certain times races were held. Horses belonging to the neighbors ran here; also races were matched between horses from Baxter Springs, Chetopa, Seneca and even farther away. You could bet anything on the race whether it was your hat, watch, or knife. Sometimes the ladies would bet a quarter but we did not have much money and so the bets were usually personal belongings.

Law

In that day there were a few citizen police but these were so scattered and so hard to reach quickly that often the men themselves would take things in their own hands and hang a cattle thief or two.

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Grandpa kept many cattle on the range and later began to raise much wheat.

Marriage

At Baxter Springs, Kansas, on November 27, 1894, I married Tom Smith, a Muncie Indian, who was born in Miami County, Kansas, May 30, 1868. We moved to my allotment north and west of my grandfather's and here we built a small comfortable frame house. Here our children, three girls and one boy, were born.

Later as things had gone well with us we built a large two story frame house and lived there until fourteen years ago when we sold it and moved to Commerce where we have since made our home. Our girls are married but our son, still single, makes his home with us here.