

SMITH, JOHN RICHARD

INTERVIEW

#9337

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Form A-(S-149)

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

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt.

This report made on (date) November 15, 1937.

1. Name John Richard Smith

2. Post Office Address Lone Wolf, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) R. 1.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 17, Year 1872

5. Place of birth Louisiana.

6. Name of Father Mathew Smith Place of birth Alabama.

Other information about father Confederate Soldier in Civil War.

7. Name of Mother Rebekah Hamcock Smith Place of birth Arkansas

Other information about mother Pioneer 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 4

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Ethel B. Tackitt,
Investigator
November 15, 1937.

Interview with John Richard Smith.
Lone Wolf Kiowa County, Oklahoma
February 17, 1872
Father-Mathew Smith
Mother Rebekah Hammock Smith

I was born in Louisiana, February 17, 1872.

My father, Mathew Smith, had served as Confederate soldier through the Civil War, working as a boot, shoe and harness maker for the Army, at which trade he continued throughout his life.

My mother was Rebekah Hammock, native of Arkansas, and she was a typical mother of the days following the Civil War.

My parents moved about in the South a good deal and when I was sixteen years old they decided to go West and we moved from Webster Parish, Louisiana, to Texas, where I grew up and married.

My wife and I wanted a home of our own and we heard much about the Indian Territory and the new land, which the Government was opening up for the settlers.

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We thought that I could get land in the Cherokee Strip which opened up in 1893 but it opened up by run and we could not get there in time for me to make the Run.

We loaded what little bedding and cooking outfit we owned into a two-horse covered wagon and started for the Chickasaw Nation. We crossed Red River at Courtney Flat and as all we had to depend upon for a living was my labor we moved from place to place wherever I could get work of any kind.

At last we went to Woolsey, which is now in Stephens County. Here my wife sickened and died and I was left alone with two small children, with no one to help me care for them and no way to pay for their care except with my day labor.

This was in the year 1896 and I brought the two little children and came to the Cheyenne and Arapaho country to what is now Washita County. There were few settlers, as many of them only spent the required amount of time on their claims to hold them and only built dugouts and such improvements as they could make out with.

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I had no claim and no money with which to buy one so I went to work anywhere I could find a job digging wells, digging post holes, and dugouts, building fence and helping to put in farms. For this labor I received 75 cents per day and out of this wage I had to hire someone to keep my two children and care for them as well as to support myself.

Wives of the few settlers were very kind and many of them looked after my children and helped care for them, else I could never have made my way through.

I later married again and we took the children and lived in a kind of boxed up shed and the roof was a tarpaulin tacked over the top which sloped only one way.

When storms, snow or rain came all we could do was to go to the home of a neighbor, where we were always welcome until the weather cleared up and we could go back to our home without a roof.

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When the Kiowa Country opened up it came in by drawing and I did not draw any place.

I later bought a place six miles north of Lone Wolf in Kiowa County and here I have farmed and built a home.