

SMITH, M. M.

INTERVIEW

#9438

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

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Field Worker's name Robert H. Boatman

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

1. Name M. M. Smith,

2. Post Office Address Newcastle, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Newcastle, Oklahoma.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 28 Year 1892

5. Place of birth Stigler, Indian Territory

6. Name of Father M. J. Smith Place of birth Alabama

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Mary J. Place of birth Tennessee

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 3.

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Robert H. Boatman,
Investigator,
December 13, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. M. M. Smith,
Newcastle, Oklahoma.

My father came to the Territory in a very early day, having come from Tennessee, settling near Stigler, in the Choctaw Nation, and it was there I was born on August 28, 1892.

There were many Indians though they were all very friendly and peaceable. Many pioneer settlers were coming into the country for the purpose of seeking their fortunes in what was then known as the best stock raising country in the middle west. Many grasped each opportunity that was presented; others seemed to be of roaming natures, who had come for no other purpose than just to see what the country held in promise.

I attended my first school in the Pottawatomie country; a subscription school as all the early schools were.

The teachers then received their salaries by each child paying from \$1.00 to \$1.50 for attending school. The term of school consisted of from three to five

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months per year, depending upon the number of students in attendance; the buildings were of the very rudest of the primitive log type, a one-room structure with no windows and only one door. The professors of such schools then used the strictest of discipline. The rules were written on paper by the teacher and read openly to the school on Monday morning of each week and were to be remembered by the students until the following Monday. One of the punishments was the use of a dunce cap which, for some broken rule, was then placed on the head of the offender who was then put on display before the entire school and the other students were then allowed to jest and make sport of the offender. Very few were ever required to answer for a second offence.

I received my education at schools like the above mentioned. When I grew up I went into the mercantile business. I worked very hard at all times for the full development of the business in which I was engaged. I have been very successful after many attempts and

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hardships.

I now live at the small inland town of Newcastle where I am actively engaged in the mercantile business.