

SPARKS, J. B.

INTERVIEW

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Nettie Cain,  
Interviewer.  
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Interview with J. B. Sparks.

J. B. Sparks of Atwood, a white man, was born near Springfield, Missouri, in 1869. He went to Fort Smith, Arkansas, when a young man. When then from Ft. Smith, he went to old Skulleyville which was one of the oldest trading posts in the Indian Territory.

His father traveled thirty miles in a week to see Jerry Fulson, a Choctaw Indian, who was a councilor in the Choctaw tribe and had charge of lots of land, so J. B. and his father went to see him about getting a lease of land.

Mr. Fulson had a large house of about sixteen rooms and he had several Indian families living there and he had seen that these families were well cared for. As soon as he was told what Mr. White and J. B. wanted he gave them a lease on the river where the land was very rich and they made good crops of cotton and corn.

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Jerry Fulson married a white girl named Scroggins. They had one child's time. He gave his wife a horse and buggy and \$500.00 and sent her home and then he took himself two white girls for his wives. This was about 1891.

P. M. Sparks served in the Civil War and was located part of the time at Fort Gibson; he was there when Price's army came. There were about three thousand men and they stayed for three days.

Just a few days after Price's army had gone, General Curtis and his men came. General Curtis was in the Cavalry; he asked the boys if they were tired as they all had worked very hard and had not had much rest.

On the fourth of July, 1890, there was a big celebration and anyone could buy a ticket for fifty cents and they could eat, drink, dance; and everything was free.

That night Belle Starr and her daughter Pearl were at the dance, and they danced; they had their sixshooters on.

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Mr. Cober, a few from Fort Smith, had brought them to the dance.

They were both very good-looking but no one was used to seeing ladies wearing sixshooters buckled around their waists.

When Mr. Sparks located it atwood in 1892 there was one store in the town conducted by Mr. G. W. Jones. People would go to take for the fall market, loading their cotton there; on one trip it took three weeks to make the round trip.

There were six wagons on one trip and there were three bales of cotton on each wagon.

On the way back Mr. Sparks and he were with him met forty wagons going to market.

When they reached the river an Indian man weighing about two hundred pounds was helping to put the wagons across the river; the weather was cold enough to have some ice and this Indian man had on only his shirt, no shoes or pants, and he would wade ahead of the team, testing for quick sand and the depth of water. He had a stick so if he got in quick sand he would wave it

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real fast; that meant to hurry. They gave him \$1.00 on this trip.

The men had gotten some whiskey to take back home for Christmas so when they reached the river they were told that a United States Marshal was on the other side of the river waiting to search them so they broke their bottles and poured out their whiskey except two of the boys who went up to a shallow place and waded the river and carried their whiskey.

Bass Reeves was a negro but he was a United States Marshal and made a brave officer. He was sent to get two outlaws near Atwood; he caught and arrested them and that night he went to Frank Casey's home and had them fix seas in the yard so he could sleep with both prisoners handcuffed to him. Bass Reeves was a large man weighing over two hundred pounds.

Bass Reeves' son was in the Indian Territory and some of the United States Marshals were afraid of

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him so Pass told them he would go after his son himself and bring him back either dead or alive.

Moran Pruett was one of the first judges of the first United States Commissioners' Court.

The United States Commissioners' Court, which was nearest to Atwood was at Stonewall.