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(ATKINSON, W. E.

INTERVIEW

8834

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 Indian-Pioneer History Project

ATKINSON, W. E.

INTERVIEW

8834

Field Worker's name Thad Smith, Jr.This report made on (date) October 11, 19371. Name W. E. Atkinson,2. Post Office Address Chickasha, Oklahoma.3. Residence address (or location) 915 Choctaw Avenue4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 18 Year 18735. Place of birth Texas6. Name of Father Charles H. Atkinson, Place of birth Virginia7. Name of Mother Sarah Darnell Place of birth ArkansasOther information about mother Buried at Chickasha, Oklahoma.Other information about father Buried Montague County, Texas.

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 .

ATKINSON, W. E.

INTERVIEW

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Thad Smith, Jr.,
Investigator,
October 11, 1937.

Interview with W. E. Atkinson,
915 Choctaw Avenue,
Chickasha, Oklahoma.

I came into the Indian Territory in 1891, acting as scout for a wagon-train of ten wagons from New Mexico.

My duty was to ride ahead of the wagons, and locate places on the creeks, which could be crossed with wagons; also to find good places to camp where there were both wood and water, if possible.

There were roads to follow part of the way, but part way we made our own road.

We saw several bands of Indians camped on creeks near water. Of course, the Indians were all peaceable and friendly at that time and caused us no trouble, whatsoever.

We came across Greer County and travelled due east. We stayed on the south side of the Washita River in the Kiowa and Comanche country.

We saw a lot of wild game while crossing the Kiowa and Comanche country, such as deer, elk, wild turkeys, squirrels, quail and a few mountain lions and Loafer wolves.

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After arriving in the Chickasaw Nation, near where Chickasha now is, our wagon-train disbanded and I went to work on Martin Colbert's ranch, his brand being F C on the left side. Mr. Colbert was a half-blood Chickasaw Indian. He had several hundred head of cattle and horses. I worked for Mr. Colbert a year, doing the regular duties of a cowboy, working and branding cattle and horses.

The Fall of 1902 I ran a corn-sheller, pulled by a steam engine, in and near Chickasha. The corn crops all made from fifty to sixty bushels per acre. The shelled corn was sold for 35¢ per bushel, loaded on the car.

In the winter of 1905 and 1906 the Washita River was frozen solidly and I crossed it with the corn-sheller and steam engine without having a bit of trouble; the ice didn't even crack.

I think it was in the winter of 1905 that I got a hunting permit from Major Baldwin, the Indian Agent, to hunt in the Big Pasture.

Several of us would go to the Kechi Hills and hunt

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deer and turkey and we always got more meat than we could eat. We would dress the deer, leaving the hides on, and bring them to Chickasha and sell them to the butcher-shops, for what we could get.

I have trapped a few quail, but never more than I wanted to eat, although I have seen men trap them for commercial purposes. Most of them were shipped, dressed, to big cities for sale.

I have seen a lot of land broken with a yoke of oxen and a sod plow.

The grass in the country was good and hay could be cut nearly any place.

I ran a livery stable in Chickasha in 1898 and I paid \$3.50 per ton for prairie hay.

The Government used to pay the Indians their grass lease share in silver. The silver was shipped to Chickasha by train and loaded into a Government wagon and hauled to Anadarko to be paid. The wagon was guarded by about one hundred soldiers.

I registered at El Reno for the drawing of a claim in the Caddo, Kiowa and Comanche country, but I was unsuccessful.