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INDEX CARDS

Negro
Negro Churches-Chickasha
Caddo, Nowa, Comanche Opening-
Negroes Drew Claims

Thad Smith, Jr.
Field Worker
May 10, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. R. A. Bass
114 Minnesota Avenue. Chickasha Oklahoma.
Born July, 1864. Alabama.
Father - George Clark
Mother - Ann Thorn.

A Story Told by Mrs. R. A. Bass.

I was born in Mississippi, and came to Oklahoma in 1900, with a family of white folks as their cook. We landed in Chickasha, which was then just a small town, mostly of tents and dugouts. My employer was named R. K. Wooten who founded the Chickasha oil mill, as well as several others. We moved into a big new house that had never been lived in, which was awfully nice. Of course we didn't have electricity or city water.

I don't believe there were over twelve or fifteen families of negroes in Chickasha at that time, but there were several negro families living in the country, farming.

There was plenty of work for those in town, such as, janitor work, oil mill work, railroad work, and some drove teams hitched to surreys for the richest people.

There were several well-to-do families in town who had awfully pretty, well matched teams with negro drivers.

There were two negro churches in Chickasha when I re-

member. One was the First Baptist with Henry Darrington as preacher. The other was called the African Methodist; a fellow named King was preacher. Both preachers worked at other jobs during the week.

The negro children were given schooling in the Baptist church. The teacher's name being Hawkins. The parents paid the teacher's salary.

The Chickasha fire department consisted of three stations. The fire wagons were drawn by horses. Not having any water system, the fire boys used some kind of chemicals to extinguish the fires.

Women in those days wore modest clothes. The dresses came down to their ankles, and in the winter they wore high top shoes, and they always wore a broad brimmed hat, and used hat pins to keep the wind from blowing it off. Most of the men wore broad brimmed hats and boots.

There were several Indian dances held in Chickasha, I never went, but I could hear the drums beating.

Father Isadore was the Catholic priest in Chickasha when I came.

There was a good bit of farming near Chickasha. The principal crops were cotton and corn. Cotton was worth about

six cents per pound and corn generally sold for twenty five cents per bushel.

There were lots of quail in the country, but to my knowledge no deer or wild turkey.

Chickasha was in the Chickasaw Nation.

When the Caddo, Kiowa, and Comanche country was opened several negroes drew claims.

The Indians that I remember wore moccasins and blankets. The blankets were usually pulled up over the head to protect it from the heat or cold.

I did all of my cooking on a wood stove.
