

FLAX, JOE

INTERVIEW

#7564

FLAX, JOE

- 11 - INTERVIEW

Form D-(S-149)

756483

LEGEND & STORY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field worker's name Joe Southern

This report made on (date) September 17 1937

1. This legend was secured from (name) Joe Flax

address Atoka, Oklahoma

This person is (~~male~~ or female) White, Negro, Indian, Freedman

If Indian, give tribe Cherokee,

2. Origin and history of legend or story First Methodist colored church established in Atoka, Oklahoma

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached

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Interview with Joe Flax  
Atoka, Oklahoma

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FIRST NEGRO CHURCH ESTABLISHED IN ATOKA, METHODIST

In 1882 there was a brush arbor built by colored people one half mile south of where the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad Depot is now located in a grove of native timber on a hill near a good spring of water. The membership of this church grew to fifteen members in 1885, then a log house was built. In 1890 Bishop Heard, from Atlanta, Georgia, came to Atoka and held a series of meetings, collecting enough funds to build a church of lumber. The building was 20 x 30 ft. with bell tower, well ventilated with windows and doors. In 1895 the present building was built, its dimension 40 x 60 ft; 12 foot studded wall with bell tower, well ventilated and well seated. Some of the members from brush Arbor days, now deceased, were Cinis Thompson age sixty-nine at death, Cook Thompson age 73, at death,

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Henry Collins age seventy five at death and Ruthie  
Anderson age seventy.

Bishop Heard died at Atlanta, Georgia, September,  
12, 1937 aged eighty seven years, buried at Philadelphia,  
Pennsylvania.

Jane Ward now living in Atoka is 108 years old.  
This church and its members have been very active in  
helping to build other churches, lodges, and schools  
for the colored people of Atoka.