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FIELD WORKER JOHNSON H. HAMPTON
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INTERVIEW WITH B. B. BERRY
Antlers, Oklahoma.
Born October 22, 1881, Vicksburg,
Mississippi.

I was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, October 22, 1881, and I was about six years old when we came to Indian Territory.

My father and mother moved to this country and located at Antlers, which was in the Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory.

My father's name was H. W. Berry, and my mother's name was Mary Kleanor Noble; my mother was born and reared in Louisiana, and my father was born in Arkansas and they were married ⁱⁿ Ashley, Arkansas; they then moved to Vicksburg, Mississippi where I was born.

After the Civil War they moved to Texas.

My father was in the Civil War on the Confederate side: he was in the Vicksburg battle and he served the latter part of the war.

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My mother had five brothers with the Confederate army.

Three of her brothers were killed in the war and after the war the rest of the family moved into Texas, lived there for a while and then moved to Indian Territory.

My father came over first and got located and he then came back for us; we came over with him and located in what is now Antlers. Father and Mother both lived here until their death; my father was killed in Antlers, and my mother died two or three years ago; they are both buried in the Antlers Cemetery at Antlers. My mother was ninety-one years old when she died.

As well as I remember mother told me that when we arrived in Antlers there were but three small stores and a post office, and there were but a few white people in the town.

V. M. Locke had a store on one corner, and Coleman Nelson had a store on the other corner and W.W. Gardner had one at the next corner; Mr. Gardner had the post office

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in his store too and right behind the Gardner store, S. K. Newcome had a livery stable.

The Gardner store and the livery stable were located where the First National Bank is now; the street was full of big trees; there were no side walks and people who passed along the street on both sides would take a shot at the trees that were out in the middle of the street.

When we first got here we came over on the train and had no furniture of any kind. Mother had sold all the furniture we had in Texas. We arrived here, we rented a box house and that is where we lived for several years before we bought a lot and built our own house. At that time this little town of Antlers was wild. The Frisco Railroad had not been built very long when we got here and the town was very small, and there was no officer to keep peace so the people would get wild sometimes.

My mother was the first one to suggest and to have a Christmas tree for the children who were living

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in Antlers at that time and she was the first one who made ice cream in Antlers too.

The people of the town had never had a Christmas tree of any kind up to that time and they did not have any ice cream at that time so after she made ice cream for them once they wanted her to make it for them every day which she did. There were very few children in Antlers at that time but afterwards, a sawmill and a planer were put up near the place where the spring is now. There were many white people who drifted into the town.

Antlers grew some but not much for the folks that came in were sawmill people and did not stay long; after a little while, they would quit the sawmill work and move some where else.

When we moved to this town the country was wild, although there were but few Indians who lived near Antlers. The Indians lived in communities a few miles from Antlers.

There were no houses along the road between here and what is now Finley, but away from the road there were some Indian houses and from here on to Atoka,

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there were no houses except a few Indian houses where Farris is now. That was the way all over this country. Then there were a good many Indians in the country but they lived in communities some few miles apart.

The country was full of wild game at that time; anyone could go out on the river and kill a turkey at any time and could kill deer as well; the river was full of fish.

You could see fish floating on top of the water at that time.

We would go out and get a deer anywhere we wanted to and we could get turkeys too. I remember one time our milk cows were out all day on the range and when they came back home that evening several deer came home with them; we did not bother them so they stayed with the cows for several days before they finally left.

When the Locke and Jones war was on Mother took some ammunition to the house while the shooting was going on and went into the house where Locke and his men were at the time of the shooting and came out without a scratch.

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At the time we moved to Antlers there were no churches of any kind and there was no school. The Masons and the Methodist people went together and built the Methodist Church house; the Masons had the upper floor and that was the first church house built in Antlers and then after several years the Reverend Mr. E. Brantly, a Presbyterian Preacher, came into the town and built his church and then he built a school house where we all attended school. He taught the school himself his salary was paid by subscriptions \$1.00 per month for each child. At first he did not have many pupils but he did not give up. He finally had a good school which he ran until the town built a graded school; he then gave up his school and tore the building down so the Brantly Building is no more.

The first newspaper that Antlers had was published by a man named J.Y. Schink, I do not remember the name of the newspaper. I was the "devil" on the paper but the name of it has slipped my mind. Mr. Schink edited

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the paper for several years then sold out and moved away from here. I was the first boy who sold the Dallas Morning News in Antlers, but I did not sell many copies for there were not many people who read the paper, and there was no daily paper at that time only the Dallas Morning News.

I remember the first killing that took place in this town; Shub Locke one of V. M. Locke's boys killed Jim Ashford here in town; that was the first killing but several have been killed in Antlers since then.

I have lived here nearly all of my life, I have seen the town grow from a small village into a pretty good town. I have seen the wild country grow into good farms. While there only a few white people in Antlers when I came and now the country is full of them. In the early days, there were a good many Indians here who would come to town on Saturdays with their pistols on their saddles.

Nearly all of these Indians carried their guns all the time; they would carry their

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rifles in their hands everywhere they went, but they never bothered a white man.

They would shoot one another and some times kill one another but they did not bother the white people at all at any time.

I know nearly all the full blood Indians in this country and they are all my friends. I have never had any trouble with anyone of them; they are good people to live by and they are an honest proud people.

Mother had a small store here in Antlers and she used to let an Indian have any thing he wanted on credit; he would tell her when he would pay the account and when the day would come he was right there ready to pay, and if he could not pay he would come and tell Mother that he could not pay then but would pay in a few days and when the time came that he had promised to pay he would come to the store and pay what he owed.

I think no people on earth are any more honest than the Choctaw Indians.