

MATTHEWS, W. C. (MRS.) INTERVIEW. 4759

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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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MATTHEWS, W. C. (MRS.) INTERVIEW

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Field Worker's name Thad Smith, Jr.This report made on (date) July 9, 1937. 19371. Name Mrs. W. C. Matthews,2. Post Office Address Chickasha3. Residence address (or location) 323 Iowa Avenue4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 25 Year 19375. Place of birth Texas6. Name of Father M. J. Baker Place of birth TennesseeOther information about father Buried in Chickasha, Oklahoma.7. Name of Mother Sarah J. Moncrief Place of birth TexasOther information about mother Buried in Chickasha, Oklahoma.

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 _____.

Field Worker, Thad Smith, Jr.,
July 9, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. W. C. Matthews,
Chickasha.

My father was a saddle and harness-maker by trade, and was located at Belcher, Texas, until 1893. He scouted around for a new location and decided the Indian Territory was the most promising, so in the Summer of 1893 he shipped his leather goods and all of his work-tools to Chickasha, which was located in the Chickasaw Nation.

~~That Fall, October the fifth, my mother, brother,~~
two sisters and I loaded all our belongings in a covered wagon and started for Chickasha. My brother drove eight cows along with us, which made our progress very slow.

We crossed Red River at Red River Station on a ferry-boat and traveled due north on a well traveled wagon road.

Most of the country between Belcher, Texas, and Chickasha was grass land, dotted with many cattle and horses; occasionally we would see a farm. One of the large pastures we drove through was the Keith and Price Ranch.

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We crossed many small creeks that were well timbered, and on almost every creek bank we saw fall plums, wild grapes, and black walnuts. There were many quails and prairie chickens.

We arrived in Chickasha that Fall, without having had any mishaps on our trip. Chickasha was a very small town and had big holes of water on Main Street. Some of the buildings were built on stilts, with high plank sidewalks on the street.

A good corn crop had been raised near Chickasha that year, and there were many large ricks of snapped corn in town. Most of the corn raised was fed to cattle and hogs. Very little of it was shipped out of the country.

In the Winter of 1898 I taught a subscription school in Chickasha. The charge for attending this school was one dollar for small children and one dollar and a half ~~for the older children.~~ I realized about forty dollars a month for my work. We used McGuffey's Reader, but I think our other books were made by Swintons. School was taught in a two-story frame building. The two lower rooms were used for school and the upper rooms were used

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by the Masonic Lodge.

On October 13, Mr. R. D. Helborn, a lawyer, organized the Epworth League. Many of the young people who were members of other churches belonged to the Epworth League.

Hunkapillar was the pastor of the Methodist Church. The Church at that time was a small frame building. The Epworth League specialized in charity work. Colonel Bain furnished a turkey and a sack of flour to every poor family in town, through our Epworth League. The merchants of the town donated other food.

In 1902 smallpox hit the town and a good many people died with it. I took the smallpox and my mother caught it from me and died from it.

In 1904, diphtheria was very bad in our town, and we lost several people with it.

Nearly all of the buildings in town were frame, and ~~fire destroyed several of them.~~ Our fire department was

composed of volunteers, and the building would usually burn before the men could gather and get to the fire.

There were only a few Indians living in Chickasha, but a good many of them would come to all celebrations.

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The Fourth of July was usually enjoyed by having a beef barbecue and lemonade stands. We had foot races, a program given by the Sunday School, and speeches given by the most prominent people of the country.

I have attended several Indian dances. Many of the Indians had beautiful costumes made of buckskin and covered with beads.

My father, my brothers and I registered for the drawing of land, when the Caddo, Kiowa and Comanche country was opened but none of us were lucky enough to draw a claim.

My father did a very good business in his saddle and harness shop as there were many cowboys and farmers in the country.