

UPCHURCH, ANN

INTERVIEW

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

Field Worker's name Lillian Cassaway,

This report made on (date) April 15, 1938.

Name Ann Upchurch.

Post office Address Anadarko, Oklahoma.

Residence address (or location) 203 East Main Street.

DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 19 Year 1881.

Place of birth Texas.

Name of Father Isaac Akin. Place of birth Mississippi.

Other information about father _____

Name of Mother Missouri Haines Akin. Place of birth Texas.

Other information about mother _____

es 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 6

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Lillian Gassaway,
Investigator,
April 15, 1938.

An Interview With Ann Upchurch,
Anadarko, Oklahoma.

I came with my parents from Texas about forty-seven years ago. My father was a timber worker. He put up hay in the summer and then sawed logs for houses and fences during the winter. There were several girls in the family so my father taught us to saw logs. We helped him most of the time. Log houses were about the only kind of houses that there were then.

We settled near Durant on the Blue River. The water of this river was the clearest I ever saw. We used to go fishing but did not use a hook and line. The men would go at night and light a lantern and hold it over the water. The fish could be seen very plainly on the bottom of the stream and the men would gig them.

We lived in a tent with a dirt floor until my father could build a house of logs. There wasn't much farming then. Almost all the land was prairie and when you wanted to go anywhere you just went over the prairie, as there

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were no roads. If you asked a man the direction to a place he would pick out some landmark and direct you to that, then to another landmark until you arrived at your destination. One day my father saw some Indians and he thought he would ask directions of them. The man was walking ahead and the woman following with a baby on her back. Then my father started talking to them and the woman sat the baby down then they sat down and not a word did they say. All he could get out of them was a grunt.

The main way to travel then was in covered wagons, some of which were pulled by oxen. Oxen were always used for farming because the ground was full of roots. The land looked so pretty and smooth, but when you started to plow it, it was full of these roots and nothing could pull through it except oxen. Men were just beginning to clear up land for farming then. Ponies and horses were used mainly for riding animals.

The main entertainment in those days were dancing. Father used to fill the wagon with hay and we would heat rocks to put around in it to keep warm by, then would

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gather twenty or thirty people and go miles to a dance. There was an Indian of the name of Cheeko who had two sons, Bud and Bob. One night at a dance the house was small and as was customary when the house was too small for the crowd and the dancers at the same time, the men were standing around a fire in the yard. Bob got drunk. A drunk man was not even allowed in the house, let alone on the floor. Bob was drunk and began to shoot the fire out. Bud threw him down and hog-tied him, and left him there until he sobered up.

Cheeko had a daughter who fell in love with a white man of the name of Ed Potts. Her father didn't want her to marry him, and to keep her from it he sent her away to school. He put her on the train but gave her no money, and told her that she couldn't have any. On the way she sold her engagement ring and wrote her sweetheart a letter. He followed her on the next train and in two days they were married.

The school houses were made of boxing planks, and were classed as slab houses. The seats were of split logs and the desks were of planks. We used slates. Didn't

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have any books except the old Blue Back Speller, a reader and arithmaetic.

We lived at Kale Switch for a while. This was in the Chickasaw Nation. Game was plentiful there. Every morning when we waked up the wild turkeys were everywhere, even up around our door. The deer used to pass through our front yard. That didn't last very long, though.

After I was married I lived near Ardmore. I was there when there were only three or four houses there. Our house was about like the lease houses were then, very poorly built. People were charged five dollars a year to live in the Territory then. I can't remember what this was for.

The only doctors we had then were Faith Doctors. The nearest medical doctor was about twenty-five miles away. One day one of the girls in the neighborhood got badly burned. She was doing the family wash when her clothes caught fire. She had on a wool linsey dress with woolen underthings. The Faith doctor was called in. The girl was sick for seventeen days then died. The people were so angry because the family had not called a medical

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doctor that they formed a mob and were going to mob the whole bunch. It was impossible in those days to buy a casket, so they had to have one made. The only thing that prevented mob violence was that the two leaders of the mob were gotten to make the casket, and they had to go to Texas to get material to make it. Undertakers were not known then and the women had to care for the body. It was so badly burned that it had to be wrapped before they could dress it.

There was open range for the cattle. Once in a while a cow would go mad. If anyone got near enough the cow would take after him. If one started after a person then the whole herd would follow. One day a boy was out and a mad cow started after him. He nearly ran his horse to death trying to get away. He warned everyone he saw that the cattle were coming. One day a mad cow got into a house where there was a woman with a baby. She climbed up on the rafters and stayed there until the men came home and killed the cow. A man didn't dare leave the house without his gun. We did very little visiting during the time that the cattle were mad. I never learned what

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caused it. Sometimes the cattle ate loco weed and then sometimes they were bitten by the phobia cats.

We had wild hogs then, too. They were very vicious. If a person successfully got out of their way, usually up a tree, they had to stay there until they could be rescued. The hogs never left until they got their victim or got too hungry or thirsty to stay. And they stayed as long as there was a noise.

When we were living in the tent the wolves were bad. They would begin to appear about dusk. My mother had brought her chickens with her. One night the wolves attacked the chickens and they flew everywhere. Some of them even ran through the camp fire.

We never had any trouble with the Indians, but we had many friends among them. The squaws used to hollow out a stump and grind their own corn with a mallet. They raised the squaw corn variety.