

WARD, JOHN

SECOND INTERVIEW

7606

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

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Field worker's name Joe Southern.

This report made on (date) September 22, 1937. 1937

1. This legend was
secured from (name) John Ward.

Address Chickasha, Oklahoma.

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

If Indian, give tribe Cherokee.

2. Origin and history of legend or story Robbery of stage coach and
killing of the driver in year 1867 by the Billey Shields
gang which was located in Atoka County then.

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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Joe Southern,
Interviewer.
Sept. 22, 1937.

An Interview With John Ward,
Chickasha, Oklahoma.

John Ward now lives at Chickasha. A stage robbery happened in Atoka County in 1867 in which Fred Nickolds, the stage driver, was killed. There were no other passengers riding on the stage coach at the time this robbery and killing happened.

The location of this place is now in Sec. 21 NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ T 2 S, R 11 E. one and a half miles southwest of Atoka where the Fort Smith and Boggy Depot Freight and Stage Line crossed the creek. This crossing was named Dead Man's Crossing, and a man of the name of Billy Shields and his gang were supposed to have done the robbing and killing. Jim Davis and John Ward's father and others buried the man near the place where he was killed.

After receiving order from the court located at Fort Smith, Arkansas, a posse of United States Deputy Marshals, led by one whose nick name was "Negro" Smith from Fort Smith, came to Atoka for the purpose of capturing this gang

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of killers and robbers. They met these men near Atoka and had a gun battle with this robber gang in which one of this gang got shot through the leg. They brought him to Atoka, had his leg dressed and left him in a small empty house near my father's blacksmith shop, and my father had me carry cold water to this man and keep the bandage around his leg, and keep his wound damp.

That evening, about dark, three men rode up to the door of this small house and called out to this man and asked him if he was able to ride horseback; he answered, "Yes". They put him on a horse in the saddle in front of one of the men and rode off in the dark. If the United States men ever arrested them I have no knowledge of it. One of these men gave me a \$10.00 gold piece for my service in taking care of this man who was shot during the day.

The grave where the stage driver was buried is still visible.