

WEST, WILLIS INTERVIEW.

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Field worker: Lillian M. Cassaway  
June 11, 1937.

Interview with Willis West  
Anadarko, Oklahoma,  
608 East Main St.

Born August 27, 1858,  
Missouri.

Parents John West, father,  
Tennessee.  
Clara Wilson, mother,  
Missouri.

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Mr. West has been over the Chisholm Trail several times. He now lives in Anadarko with his wife, who is a Wichita Indian. The Chisholm Trail crossed the Red River at what was known as Red River Station, thus entering Oklahoma out of Texas. It came north through Marlow, and Rush Springs and about two and a half or three miles east of Chickasha. Near here on the Wichita River there was a station called Fred Station. Here was where Cook's supply store stood. All kind of supplies were kept here. Anything that cattlemen would want. Hops and grub (provisions). The trail went in a northerly direction, winding between two branches of Bitter Creek, but never crossing either creek. It crossed the

North Canadian River about twelve miles east of Ft. Reno. Darlington was just across the river north of Ft. Reno. This crossing was about half way between the J. H. Bond and J. I. Campbell places. There was a stage station at Kingfisher.

B. P. Smith bought the Campbell place later, and later still he became a banker at Chickasha.

After the trail entered Kansas it branched off and went in several directions. I made five trips over this trail. One to Dodge City, two to Abeline and two to Honeywell. I never went to Caldwell.

I came to Oklahoma in 1882. When I was a child I lived near Sherman, Texas. The cattlemen would come down there buying cattle and I was so interested that the cowboys bought me a long whip and rope; I had a horse and then they wanted me to go with them. I got the consent of my parents to help get these cattle together, but as much as I wanted to go I never got to drive the cattle to Gainsville. That is as far west as people went then. Then I came to Oklahoma and joined the BC (seven BC) ranch, near Silver City. I stayed there twenty-two years.

Joe Lindsay came from Atoka in a store, but when the railroad was being put through the country and the survey was made for the bridge across the river he sold out to a man by the name of Smith and moved to Minco. There was nothing at Minco at that time but he put up a store on the bald prairie. As the railroad advanced, Joe Lindsay advanced with it. Later he moved to Chickasha and became County Treasurer and held this office for six years.

When I came here in 1832 they were just moving the Agency from the north side of the river to the south side. There were several traders' stores here, three or four. The commissary was about half a mile east of the new agency.

I was in only one skirmish with the Comanches; and that was in Texas. They were after a man by the name of Dick Boring. I was working for Boring and his brother, Alex. One day some of us were riding the range and noticed some smoke in the timber. We decided that we had better see what the trouble was. As we came over a little rise, the Indians had seen us and we

saw them leaving. As we got closer we saw that the Indians had gotten Dick and tied him to a tree and piled brush all around it and set fire to it. When we got to him the fire had just begun to singe Dick's clothes. In just a few more seconds he would have been beyond help. We scattered the fire and cut him free. When leaving, the Indians took Dick's horse, saddle, and rifle. Dick wanted his outfit so he got on behind the man on the best horse, and struck out after the Indians. When close enough they began to fire at them. They either were too scared to fight or so eager to get away that they never fired a shot, and they turned the horse loose. I don't believe an Indian was killed.

L. Osborne was an Indian trader, and had a store north of Anadarko. He was killed in the last trouble the Wichitas had with the white people here, in 1374.

The merchandise then had to be hauled to Anadarko in wagons. This massacre took place about a mile and a half or two miles east of Anadarko, a little east of the present Youngblood country home. Osborn was

expecting his wagons loaded with merchandise to come in. He met the wagons at this place. The Indians attacked them and killed them all, even the old negro cook, who tried to run away. They caught him and tied him to a tree and killed him. There was an old fiddler camping under this tree, and he was fiddling away when he saw the Indians coming. He ran through the timber, and off toward Little Washita. Some of the men when they saw what was happening went to Little Washita to get help. When they got there they found this same man sitting under a tree playing his fiddle.

The Comanches made most of their raids along the border of Texas. Sometimes they would go farther into the state but mostly along the border. They were usually after the immigrants. Sometimes they would not harm anyone, only taking their horses, and again they would murder everyone in the crowd.

I don't know much about Quannah Parker. They say he had a lot of wives, but I don't know. He was smart and could hold his own with the authorities at Washington. His mother was a white woman who had been captured by the Indians while she was a small child. Her given name was Cynthia Ann. Her people got her back but she ran away and went back to the Indians. They tried every way to get her to come home but she had been with the Indians too long before she was found.