

INDEX CARDS

Traders--Sac and Fox
Agencies--Sac and Fox
Trails
Freighting
Payments--Sac and Fox
Stroud

Field Worker: Lenna M. Rushing
March 12, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mr. J. B. Charles (White)
Stroud, Oklahoma

BORN 1854 (approximately)

I was three years old when my parents brought me to Oklahoma. My father contracted a job with the government to run a store at the Sac and Fox Indian agency. No one but those who had the permission from the government or who were working for the government were allowed in this Indian jurisdiction, so we did all the trading with the Indians. We sold them every thing they needed- buggies, harness, hardware, hogs, etc.

It was hard getting the supplies here. They had to come up to Red Fork, and from there by wagons. As there were no wagon trails, the men had to make their own, but by following along the same way they made a sort of trail. The wagons usually went across the Creek County and through Tulsa County just this side of the Arkansas River. I believe that this gradually grew into a trail used by any wagons going up that way.

We had the store until I was appointed agent for the Sac and Foxes succeeding Mr. Patrick. Much business was carried on through the agency, and thousands of dollars passed through the agency every month. All the business done by the Indians was transacted through the office. They sold their lands, leased them, bought

lands, and were issued silver and gold. This money was brought in on wagons by government men, until the bill was passed in Congress ordering the issuance of checks rather than silver or gold. I remember when the Indians got their first checks. The majority of them knew nothing of their value, and, when they got them, did not know what to do with them. Many of them threw their checks away, and the trail from the office to the store was littered with checks that had been thrown away. Of course, after so long a time, they learned how to exchange their checks for silver. Most of the older Indians, however, were very indignant about not receiving money direct from the office. They felt like they were being cheated, and it was a long time before there were no complaints about the "paper money." It was nothing for an Indian to get a check for five hundred dollars, a thousand or two thousand dollars.

After my appointment as agent expired, I moved to Stroud, and started in on banking. I do not get out to the agency much any more, but it is sad to see how the buildings have deteriorated. The old school brings pain to my heart every time I pass and see them fallen into disrepair. I understand that there are still a few families living there, but it is not at all like the agency was when I was out there.

Supervisor's Note:

There must be an error, in the year of Mr. Charles Brith, as Sac and Foxes did not move into Indian Territory until 1869.