

CHISM, JIM H.

INTERVIEW

10077

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

CHISM, JIM H.

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Field Worker's name Ruby Wolfenbarger,This report made on (date) February 24, 1938.

1. Name Jim H. Chism,
2. Post Office Address Sentinel, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) Sentinel
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 26 Year 1881
5. Place of birth Texas

6. Name of Father Will Chism Place of birth Alabama  
Other information about father Farmer
7. Name of Mother May Archebel Place of birth Texas  
Other information about mother Housewife.

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 3.

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Ruby Wolfenbarger,  
Investigator,  
February 24, 1938.

An Interview with Jim H. Chism,  
Sentinel, Oklahoma.

I was born in Texas, 1881. I am one sixteenth Cherokee Indian. I came to the Territory in 1897. I had an uncle out here and he had promised me work. He had filed on land in Washita County, near what is now Dill City the year before. I came through with two other boys about my age. Each of us had a good pony and we came through on horseback. We brought a few clothes and a little money to buy our food and tobacco with. We camped wherever night found us. We slept on the ground and covered up with our saddle blankets. We let our horses graze near by. One night we thought that the Indians were trying to steal our horses and we got up and watched the rest of the night but nothing happened.

We took our time as we wanted to see the country just as much as we wanted work. We always found out how far it was to the next town so we could buy enough food to last us. We saw great herds of cattle grazing around over the country.

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Grass was very rank and high. We didn't see very many fences as we came along.

In the early days you could cut out across the prairie and go most any place that you wanted to. We didn't find many roads. We arrived at my uncle's after being on the road about two weeks. My uncle lived in a half-dugout which was full of fleas and had a dirt floor. He had about sixty acres in cultivation and he planted corn, kaffir and oats. He had to take his cotton to Duncan to market and also got most of his groceries there.

One man would take a wagon to Duncan or to Vernon, Texas, and bring back enough groceries for all the settlers in that community. They would get enough to last about six months.

We got our wood to burn from Caddo and Kiowa Counties. If the Indians caught you with a load of wood they made you pay for it or unload the wagon. Sometimes we would get six wagon loads for 50 cents.

Most all the settlers had tried to locate on an underground stream of water. We had one of the best wells in that

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part of the country. I worked for my uncle for \$20.00 per month with board. I slept in a barn the first year although I slept out of doors in the summer. The other boys got work from the other settlers. We had lots of blizzards and storms in the early times. We had more rain then than we have today.

Neighbors would drive for twenty miles to spend the night with each other. People always liked for company to come and if anyone was passing through the country he or she was always welcome to stop and spend the night.

I have driven twenty miles in a wagon or on horseback on a Saturday night to a big dance in the country. Sometimes we took the girls. Every one went along together.

I don't know much about the schools in the early days. They were just little one-room log houses and they were very poorly equipped. The larger boys kept plenty of wood to burn. The children had to walk several miles.

I worked there for several years then I rented a farm and have lived around this part of the country since 1887.