

DOWDY, JOHN. INTERVIEW.

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Dowdy, John--Interview

Field worker: Harry M. Dreyer

Biography of John Dowdy (Negro)

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Born October 1, 1856 at Richmond, Virginia

Dowdy and his family lived on the same plantation for good many years. Latter they were scattered, being sold to different plantation owners. When he was a small boy, his mother was tied to a tree by the son of his master and severly beaten with a heavy strap for no reason. They were not permitted to learn to read or to write. If owners learned that any of the darkies tried to write, upon many occassions they would have index fingers cut off, in order that they could not write or communicate with relatives or friends. Negroes were sold for prices ranging from \$2.00 to several thousands per head. Master had a daughter from own slave. She was very beautiful to Negroes and became a great Baptist Evangelist. She waited tables in the colored quarters and was sold because Master's wife wished to get rid of her. The buyer of best looking Negro woman, paid #3, 500 for this Negro evangelist and stated at the time she was purchased that she was now free. Dowdy when nine years old, had to keep the flies off of son of his Master when he came back from the Civil War wounded and because he (Dowdy) dropped to sleep as boy

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would. The Master's son reached out from his bed, knocked him down and sicked the dog on him to bite him. Son died a few days later of his wound and the darkies followed him to his grave. Dowdy came to Oklahoma City by train by the way of St. Louis and Kansas City in 1891, and lived with other Negroes here in the City. He could not give much information on his days around Oklahoma City because of his memory at this age seems to fail him. But his memory was clear about early days in the South. He said that there is a burial ground of Indians near Choctaw, but did not know exact location.

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