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

385

4265

Field Worker's name Jasper H. Head

This report made on (date) May 17 1937

1. Name William Bennett Diggins

2. Post Office Address Chickasha Okla.

3. Residence address (or location) 718 Okla. Ave.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 11 Year 1861

5. Place of birth State of Indiana in
Madison County

6. Name of Father E. Diggins Place of birth Indiana

Other information about father died at the age of 74

7. Name of Mother Nancy McConhey Place of birth Indiana

Other information about mother Died when 78

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.

Jasper H. Mead
Field Worker
May 17, 1937

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Interview with William Bernard Diggins
718 Oklahoma Ave. Chickasha, Oklahoma.
Father-E. Diggins
Mother-Nancy McConiehay.

I am 75 years old, having been born September 11, 1861, in Indiana, Madison County. I came to the state of Kansas in 1874, moving to Purcell, Oklahoma, in 1888. This was known then as Indian Territory or the Chickasha Nation.

I married Mrs. Mollie Sake who was born April 19th, 1871 in Utah, then a territory.

The customs and general ways of people making a living around Purcell at that time were farming and ranching. Very little land was used in farming, the largest part of the land being in ranches and at that particular place around Purcell was owned by a Negro by the name of Rich Elick. He received the name of Rich because he owned about 4000 acres of land up and down walnut creek. He was supposed to be adopted by the Indians. I don't know whether he had any Indian blood or not.

The Santa Fe and G. C. Railroad met at Purcell and was completed about 1886 or 1887.

I have lived in Grady County about 30 years.

The first schools in Territory days were called subscription schools and were located at Rush Springs, Pauls Valley, and Purcell. Each man would pay so much for each child he had in school, and that was all the cost there was.

In those days, we didn't have any ferry boats on the South Canadian river. If the river was crossed, it had to be forded. There were two main trails in Oklahoma in the early days, the names of which were Tuttle trail, Chisholm trail. The Chisholm trail crossed the South Canadian river at a point known then as the Round Tree crossing or Old Minco. This is the place where the Dalton boys were supposed to have pulled their biggest hold-up.

The Chisholm trail ranged in the eastern part of the state, while the Tuttle trail was in the west part.

Jasper H. Mead
Field Worker
May 17, 1937

Interview with William Bernard Diggins.

In 1875 about 175 Indian Braves and their families under control at Fort Reno escaped into Kansas. On their way they killed several drivers of freight wagons, owned by Finley & Wilson who had a government contract to haul freight. At the Haines Relay station they murdered every one but Ed. Lobie, the wagon boss. They killed several children by dashing their heads against the corner of the log house.

Ed. Lobie, although shot three times, rounded up enough cowpunchers and ranchers to capture the Indians in the southern part of Kansas on a creek by the name of Cowskin and what few Indians weren't killed were brought back to Fort Reno.