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

Field Worker's name Thad Smith Jr.

This report made on (date) May 19 1937

1. Name Mr. Charlie Dwyer.

2. Post Office Address Chickasha

3. Residence address (or location) 923 south 9th St.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: n Month August Day 3 Year 1875

5. Place of birth Ohio

Male (white)

6. Name of Father Edward Dwyer Place of birth Maryland

Other information about father Buried in Maryland

7. Name of Mother Mary McAfee Place of birth Ohio

Other information about mother Buried in Maryland

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 _____

INTERVIEW WITH CHARLIE DWYER
Chickasha, Okla.

I came to Oklahoma February the 22nd, 1901. I had been working for the Rock Island Railroad Company, and as they had a contract with the Government to re-survey the Caddo, Kiowa and Comanche Country, I started work the next day.

The country had been surveyed twenty seven years before, and we had all the old field notes to go by. Our job was to re-mark every quarter, with a big rock or post, just as it had been marked before. If the corner had been marked with a post, which had rotted or had been removed, we replaced it, and cut the range, township and section numbers on it with a knife that had a rounded point, that looked something like a knife that is used to trim horses hooves, or if a rock had been removed from the corner, we replaced the rock and cut the range, township, and section numbers on it with a chisel.

My salary was forty dollars a month and my board.

There were three camps, with thirty-five men in each camp, doing the surveying. Each man, before starting to work, took an oath to turn in his field notes each night, and to not keep a separate set of notes for in-

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dividual use. These notes were very valuable as they gave the description of each quarter of land surveyed, and could be sold to real estate men, for future use in locating men who drew claims. I was paid extra to see that none of the men kept notes for individual use, and I noticed several men doing this, and reported it to the boss. The boss then searched them and their belongings and in every case found their notes, and discharged them.

We took a covered wagon with us each day to haul our food, cooking utensils, horse feed and other necessities. We were fed first class food and we took just enough for our lunch, soon after we started work cowboys commenced dropping in on us at meal time, and we started taking more with us each time. I remember as many as ten cowboys would ride up to our wagon, and drop the reins on their horses and without any invitation get a plate, knife and fork and load their plate with food. I thought this very unusual as I had been raised in Ohio, but I soon became accustomed to it, as I found the cowboys to be very accommodating and friendly. Several times when we would ask how and where to find a crossing on Cache Creek where we could cross with a wagon, (as the creek banks were twenty feet high in some places), the cowboy would ride ten

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miles just to show us, as he knew that it would be very hard for us to find.

We had been instructed to burn the grass off our camp site every night, so that in case of a prairie fire the old field notes of the Government would be preserved. One night we were going to camp on Saddle Creek west of Duncan, and we let our fire get away from us. The wind was blowing hard and we couldn't put out the fire. We had to let it go, and we made camp, where it had burned off. Not long after we had settled in camp, Bill Caldwell, the foreman on the Wade brothers ranch, rode up to camp, and said he was going to kill the man who started the fire and wanted to know where and who the boss was. Some fellow spoke up and said that Colonel Eldridge was the boss and was in a tent just off to the left. Caldwell rode up to the tent designated and Colonel Eldridge stepped out with two forty five six-shooters in his hands, as he had heard Caldwell threaten the other boys. Before Caldwell could say anything Colonel Eldridge told him that if there was going to be any killing done he (Eldridge) would do it, and furthermore he was going to cut any of the fences that he came to, and order his men to do the same, as the cowmen had been ordered by the Government to get all their cattle out of Caddo, Kiowa and Comanche Country six months before and to stay or

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themselves. No one but the Indians and surveyors were supposed to be there.

There were several big Indian policemen who patrolled the lines, horseback, and kept people from going through the pasture.

When we started to survey the land there were hundreds of deer, thousands of wild turkey and quail, and fish gake. Any man with a pocket knife and a piece of string could make a living hunting and fishing. I have killed prairie chicken with a six shooter. They weren't afraid of a gun and wouldn't fly unless you walked up close to them. Several of the men helping to survey killed forty or fifty quail the first day out, and ordered the cook to clean and cook them, which he refused to do. The boss then made a ruling that the men who killed the quail or other game must clean them and the cook would cook them, but not for any special person. After that there wasn't any more meat spoiled at camp.

That fall I registered at Ft. Sill for the drawing, and my registration number was seventy-two thousand two hundred and two. And there were a good many registered after I did. I failed to draw a claim.

Claim number three was staked out near Lawton, and

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this particular person was offered three thousand five hundred dollars for his relinquishment. Being against the law to sell, the parties decided to get a lawyer at Lawton, named Funkhauser, to make the trade. The party who was buying gave the money to the lawyer and the man who had the claim, relinquished to the Government. The party who was buying was standing there ready to file, but another man standing nearby wedged in and filed on the claim. Of course both men then wanted the money, and Mr. Funkhauser drew his gun and stood them off, until he could leave town, and as far as I know, he has never been heard of since. The party who drew the claim lost it, and the purchaser lost his money.

I would like to add, that a year after the opening of the Caddo, Kiowa and Comanche Country it was really hard to find any wild game at all, and that I think the Indians have been mistreated from start to finish.