

MONCRIEF, JOSEPH

INTERVIEW

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INTERVIEW

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Jasper H. MeadThis report made on (date) August 20 1937

1. Name Joseph Moncrief
2. Post Office Address Chickasha, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) South 5th Street
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 22 Year 1857
5. Place of birth Choctaw Nation one-eighth Choctaw

6. Name of Father Sampson Moncrief Place of birth Texas
Other information about father Died at the age of 78
7. Name of Mother Sophie Beshears Place of birth Alabama
Other information about mother Died at the age of 69
one-fourth Choctaw Indian.

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 6.

Jasper H. Mead
Interviewer
August 20, 1937

Interview with
Joseph Moncrief
Chickasha, Okla.

I was born August 22, 1857 in the Choctaw Nation. I am one-eighth Choctaw on my mother's side. My mother was one-fourth Choctaw.

The closest town to the place where I was born was called Scullyville, sixteen miles west of Fort Smith, Arkansas, and one mile north of Spiro.

There was a little log house in later years which was used for a school building and for a church house. I have heard my oldest sister talk about the Blue Back speller and the slate and pencil; everybody in those days went to church with their pistols on.

The Indians in those days were pretty bad. My mother has taken us children many a time and has run and hidden with us. The Indians who were the wildest were the Comanches and the Apaches, I have seen them dance around a pole and make a funny noise for three days and nights at a time.

The land around here was rather scrubby and everybody drove an ox team.

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After we all drew our land, my sister's place was down by Ninnekah and the old Chisholm Trail came through her place, coming out of Texas going north into Kansas. Traces of the Chisholm Trail are still to be seen.

Back up where I was reared, north of Scullyville on the Johnson Prairie I have seen lots of wild deer, buffalo and wild horses.

The water supply came from dug wells, and from springs and the Arkansas River.

I remember when the women would use red clay dust to put on the children in the summer time when they would break out with heat.

Ben Jones, my half brother, was a sheriff under the old Indian law but the old Indian Court did not call them Deputy Sheriffs, they called them Lighthorsemen.

When an Indian had a charge against him all they had to do was to let him know when he was supposed to come to trial and he would be there; then after he was sentenced he was sent back home to get his business straightened up, then after he had done this,

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~~regardless~~ of what the sentence was, he would nearly run his horse to death getting back to receive his punishment. I have seen them ride that way when they knew they were going to get shot. One time there was an Indian boy who was to be shot and the first ball hit him but did not kill him; his mother patted him on the back and told the man who was shooting the gun that it would take more than one shot to kill her boy; I stood by my oldest sister and saw this take place.

Very nearly all the Indians wore their native garb. The men wore what they called their breech-clouts; they did not paint up much unless they were on the war-path but they certainly did paint up then.

Some of the Indians wore what they called the coon tail, that is, the hide part came around in front of their bodies and the tail hung down behind.