

NICHOLSON, H. C. (MRS.) INTERVIEW 4312

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Field Worker: Ida A. Merwin,
June 1, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. H. C. Nicholson,
740 Holly St.,
Perry, Okla.

Born May 17, 1866,
Kendalville, Ind.

Parents Lorin Kingsley, father,
Rochester, N. Y.,
Pioneer of Indiana.
Hannah Kingsley, mother,
Rochester, N. Y.

PIONEER DAYS AT PAWNEE AGENCY.

Mrs. Nicholson states she is the wife of H. C. Nicholson, the first Indian trader at Pawnee Indian Agency, Pawnee, Oklahoma. After her marriage to Mr. Nicholson, they were located at Arkansas City, Kansas, where President Cleveland, during his first term as President, appointed Mr. Nicholson as the Indian trader for Pawnee, Oklahoma.

They made the trip from Arkansas City, Kansas, to Pawnee by stage coach, which was used to carry United States mail, and passengers. All supplies were

freighted in by the wagon trail as there were no railroads closer than Arkansas City.

The stage coach on which they made the trip was driven by Frank Anderson. When they reached the Black Bear Creek, near Pawnee, there was no bridge nor ferry and they had to ford it. The recent rains had caused the water to rise and the ponies had to swim, which caused the coach to float. The driver (Mr. Anderson) told her not to get alarmed, that the ponies would take them safely through as they had done so many times. Afterwards he commented on her bravery, sitting there holding her four months old baby and never uttering a word. She said there was such a thrill in the work they were entering that she had no thought of fear.

At Pawnee they stayed a few days with Mrs. Frank Gaddis (a missionary representing the Presbyterian Church) until their house was made ready for them. It was built of logs and consisted of two rooms with a shed on one side. It is now at the Pawnee Bill's Trading Post, as a relic.

There were only a few white people located there at this time. Malcom McKenzie was the clerk in charge, and

Dr. Hester, from Kentucky, had been appointed as the Agency Doctor. Frank Swartz was the interpreter, and later he operated a store at Red Rock, Oklahoma. Frank McDaniel, a carpenter, was building the homes for the white people. A Mr. Davis operated a boarding house, so that these together with the missionary, and the agent composed the white colony. The Indians were the Pawnees, and they were divided into four groups; known as, Pethowerats, Skeedees, Kitkahock and Chowee. Each group had a big chief. Frank White was the Chief of the Skeedees, but she could not recall the Chiefs of the others although she might give them later, if needed.

The school building that was built at that time is still in use, and remains the same now as it was then. The church work was done by missionaries.

When the Santa Fe Railroad was built south from Arkansas City, Mrs. Nicholson was a passenger on the first train. She left the train at Red Rock and took the Stage Coach on to Pawnee. Mr. Glazier was the first conductor on this train, and Charlie Minor was the agent at Red Rock, at that time.

When there were any social gatherings or church meetings the women would ride in the hack which was owned by Mrs. Gaddis, the missionary. There was room in this for four or five women and their babies. The men would ride horseback along side of the hack. The roads or trails were rough and difficult to drive over but all seemed to enjoy the meetings, and events.