

This is still an interview with Mr. Willie Woods, but due to the fact that Mr. Woods does not have any teeth, the tape is very difficult to understand. He tells about his family--their burial places, and funeral customs. They did not always have a minister for funerals, but when the minister did come to their home, they had what we would now call a Memorial service for them and all sang Choctaw hymns for the deceased. Tells about the quality of the caskets they were buried in--pine and some kind of hardwood that he does not know the name. They also put what money, tobacco and a Bible in the casket that belonged to the deceased. He remembers when they used to whip criminals for minor crimes, but if a serious crime was committed they would shoot them. They were tied to a tree and given whippings--the severity was determined by the nature of crime committed. If someone was shot there was nothing done to them except dump them in a box and take them to their relatives for burial. Tells story about man who was dug up by vandals to get the gold out of his teeth. Houses used to be built over graves, but that practice was stopped a long time ago. Most all of his relatives are buried near Pine Grove Church (Presbyterian Mission). He and his relatives built the church from lumber hauled from a saw mill that was quite some distance away and required an overnight trip.

Mr. Woods still has his home in Atoka, but remembers when Atoka had no business houses--only two restaurants--one for colored people and another for Indians and white people. Talks about different men who are members of the American Legion--Mr. Woods has been a member since 1919. Tells of generosity of people in earlier days--if he killed a deer, it was shared with neighbors, or when someone needed wood, groceries, etc. everybody helped each other.

Mr. Woods tells that Choctaws used to put feathers in their caps and paint their faces, but that has not been done for quite a long time--"All America now" he says. He does not remember his Indian name but was given one when he was born. Their crops consisted of corn, cotton, cane sorghum.