

Notice of Copyright

Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.

Use of certain published materials and manuscripts is restricted by law, by reason of their origin, or by donor agreement. For the protection of its holdings, the Western History Collections also reserves the right to restrict the use of unprocessed materials, or books and documents of exceptional value and fragility. Use of any material is subject to the approval of the Curator.

Citing Resources from the Western History Collections

For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

An example of a proper citation:

Oklahoma Federation of Labor Collection, M452, Box 5, Folder 2. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

ACORN, ZEKE

INTERVIEW

#7730

ACORN, ZEKE. INTERVIEW.

7730

Interviewer Gus Hummingbird,
October 4, 1937.

Interview with ZEKE ACORN,

Zeke Acorn, a full blood Cherokee, was born in Flint District, Cherokee Nation, in 1866. His father was Ned Acorn, a Cherokee, and his mother was Betsy Acorn, also of the Cherokee Nation. Zeke was born on Little Lees Creek, what is now Adair County. He never has been out of the state of Oklahoma. He has been living in that one community all of his life. He is now seventy-one years of age.

Early Life.

Most of Zeke Acorn's early life was spent on Lees Creek community. His father operated a small farm in this valley. The farm consisted of about ten acres. The farms in the early days were all small and a farm that contained more than ten acres was considered a large farm.

The farm on which Zeke grew to manhood was located about two miles east of the site of what is now the Belle school. His father claimed this ten acres. They built a new fence almost every year for most of the fences at that time were of brush construction.

ACORN, ZEKE. INTERVIEW.

7730

The principal crops were corn and oats. Corn was the chief crop. This could be used for food in so many different ways. People ate mostly corn meal bread at that time. Most of the meal could be made at home. So for this reason they raised more corn than anything else. Every family had what they called an old time mortar. This mortar was a home made mill. Meal was ground for every meal that was prepared.

School.

The earliest school in this part of the Flint District was the Belle School, which was located about where Bill Whitmire now lives. The school building was a small, log house. People in those days did not believe in an education. They did not send their children to school and Zeke only attended when he wanted to. He never was made to go. He did not learn enough to read and write. Later, they moved this school to where the Belle school is now. This was also their voting precinct.

Church.

The only church in this part of the Flint District was the church that was called Hanging Bell. This was the name

ACORN, ZEEBE, INTERVIEW.

7730

that the Cherokees called the church in the community. This was located in what is now known as Sallie Bull Hollow. It was a small building with one door and no windows. A large fire place was in one end of the building to heat the room during the winter months.

Later, this church was called the Antioch Baptist Church. Sometime later this church was divided into two churches and one part was called the Salem Church and the other was called Antioch. The Antioch Church was moved to a place about seven miles north of Stilwell.

Among the early day preachers were, Adam Lacie, Steve Teehee, Reverend Swimmer, who lived on Fourteen Mile Creek near the town of Hulbert. The Reverend Mr. Locust came from North Carolina about 1870. Jack Walkingstick also preached at this place; he lives at Marble City now.

Trading and Milling Points.

Evansville, Arkansas, was their chief trading and milling point at that time. This town was located about seven miles away. In the fall of the year they would go to this mill to get enough meal for the winter, but during the summer months

ACORN, ZEKE. INTERVIEW.

7730

they did their milling at home on the old time mortar. Since this was a very rough country there was no wheat raised in this community.

Game and Fish.

There was plenty of game to be found in the woods in this community at that time. Deer went by droves in the woods. Turkeys numbering about forty and fifty could be found almost everywhere. There were no laws in the Cherokee Nation to prohibit anyone from killing any amount of game that his family could make use of.

Every year the full bloods would kill fish by poisoning the large holes of water in the rivers. Fish was killed by the tons and divided among the people that contributed the roots that were used in poisoning the river. Buck eye roots were used for this purpose.

Indian Medicine.

Most of the medicine used in those days was found in the woods in herbs and roots but there were not many different kinds of diseases to be found in the Cherokee Nation. There were many Cherokee doctors.

Chills were the commonest disease that bothered the Cherokees. Consumption was the most dreaded disease among

ACORN, ZEKE. INTERVIEW.

them. They claimed this could not be cured. Many Cherokees died with this disease every year. Among the early day doctors among the Cherokees were Eli Augerhole, Alex Bunch and John Livers. They were expert in doctoring shot wounds. They knew how to doctor for snake bites.

Politics.

Politics was not so interesting to the Cherokees in this part of the Cherokee Nation. There were only two parties at that time, the Downing Party and the National Party. The Cherokees differed in politics as they did in everything else. The National Party meant, if interpreted, the Supporters of the Union. The Downing Party was called the vanishing party. Afterwards the National became the present Republican Party. The Downing Party became the Democratic Party. These two parties were what caused the Cherokee Nation to be abolished. Most of the fullbloods belonged to the National Party. Most of the mixed breeds belonged to the Downing Party. It was said by the old people of that time that some day the mixed breeds would control the legislature and when they did they would do away with their government, just as the educated young Cherokees did back in the East. Zeke saw the day when these old sayings came to pass.

ACORN, ZEKE. INTERVIEW.

7730

Voting Precinct.

The voting precinct for the Cherokees in this part of the Flint District was the Belle School House. Later the precinct was moved to the Flint Court House. Then just before statehood they moved the voting precinct to the town of Stilwell or near the town of Stilwell. There was only one store here then; this was the Henry Dannenberg store, which was located near the New Hope Cemetery.

Post Office.

The first post office was at Evansville, Arkansas. People did not communicate with the other countries as we do now. But the first post office in the Cherokee Nation, that is this part of it, was at Flint Court House. It was called Flint, I. T.

Allotment.

This was one law that almost every Cherokee protested. But the National council passed over the protest of these Cherokees. Many people think that this was a law passed by the Downing Party, but this is a mistake. Both sides agreed to pass this law. Richard Wolfe, a senator from the Goingsnake District, voted for this law, he was a National man. Every

-7-
ACORN, ZEKE. INTERVIEW.

7730

Cherokee that had an education was in favor of this law; they wanted to receive their per rata share of their country so they could go ahead and improve their own homes. Mr. Acorn was in favor of this law himself. By living the old way of everything in common a person could not improve his place as he wanted to. When the land was allotted he could know what he owned. Therefore he could improve it any way he wanted to.