

EVANS, W. A.

INTERVIEW

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362

INDEX CARDS

Creek Nation  
Agency Hill  
Tribe-Seminole

Interview with W. A. Evans, Muskogee, Okla.  
By - Jas. S. Buchanan, Field Worker.  
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363

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"BEMO"

I formed the acquaintance of the Bemo family when I first came to the Territory in 1886. The first two years I was here I farmed a place I rented from Douglas Bemo, located about two miles west of Agency Hill. I moved from that place to a farm about two miles north of Agency Hill, near the farm that belonged to Douglas Bemo's father and was known as his home place. Mr. Bemo, as we called him, (for if he had a given name I never heard of it),<sup>6</sup> was a fullblood Seminole, and one of the finest men I ever knew, and I never had a better friend and neighbor. I have spent many happy hours visiting with the old gentleman and listening to the stories of his past life.

He told me of being captured by Federal soldiers in the Seminole war in Florida when he was a very small boy, and later, through some turn of fate, he was adopted by a ship captain by the name of Bemo who took him to sea, and aboard this ship he visited many ports and saw much of the world. Captain Bemo took a great liking to the boy. He placed him in a school in Philadelphia

where he was highly educated and trained for the Baptist Ministry. He was given the name of Bemo, after Captain Bemo, and that was where the name of Bemo got into the Indians.

He was a man of culture, used good English and was a great orator. He was a most interesting man to talk with. He told me of lecture tours he made in his early life and how he capitalized on them. He would secure the most capable manager and advertising man he could get and thoroughly advertise his lectures in the papers and posters displaying his picture in his native garb, and said he had lectured before packed houses in the eastern cities that had paid him as much as a thousand dollars a night.

He was a very industrious man and had a well improved farm for this country in those days and had the best orchard in this section situated on the first shelf, or raise, about one half mile south of the Arkansas river, between the river and Agency Hill. Every winter he would have his cellar well stocked with fruit and vegetables and I never knew him to sell anything to a neighbor, but was always giving to those

who were in need. His wife was a Creek and they had four children, three boys, Douglas, Alex, and John, and one girl, whose name I do not remember.

Mr. Bemo died at his home north of Agency Hill about 1890. John and Douglas are also dead, but I do not know what became of the girl. Alex was living in the Seminole country the last I knew of him, and Lonnie Bemo, a son of Douglas Bemo, is living in Muskogee.

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