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INDEX CARDS

Cherokee Nation  
Tribe-Cherokee  
Goingsnake District  
Churches  
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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMIN. PROJ.  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name W.J.B. BIGBY

This report made on (date) June 22, 1937 1937

1. Name Martin Blackwood

2. Post Office Address Stilwell, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 9 Year 1872

5. Place of birth Goingsnake District, Cherokee Nation

6. Name of Father Louis Blackwood Place of birth Cherokee Nation

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Jennie Blackwood Place of birth Cherokee Nation

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

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 7.

Field Worker, W.J.B. Bigby  
Indian Pioneer History, #149  
June 22, 1937

INTERVIEW WITH  
MARTIN BLACKWOOD (CHEROKEE INDIAN)

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Martin Blackwood, a full-blood Cherokee, was born in Goingsnake District, Cherokee Nation, December 9, 1872. His parents were Louis and Jennie Blackwood, Cherokees. His grandfather was George Blackwood who came from North Carolina several years after the immigrants came.

The family of Louis consisted of his wife and eight children. His children were Hooley, Isaac, Caroline, Lydia, Lila, Nancy, Jane, and Martin. Martin married a fullblood girl named Susie Chewey. They now live about five miles north of Stillwell, Oklahoma.

(Early Life)

Most of Martin's early life was spent on a small farm that his father operated in what is now the Peavine Community. He now lives just about one hundred yards from where he was born on the same farm. He still operates the farm that his father cleaned up when he settled in this country.

He now lives within a mile of the house that his grandfather erected almost a hundred years ago. The logs will be one hundred years old next year.

Martin was raised on a farm and he was taught how to do all kinds of farm work at a very early age. He was a good blacksmith at the age of fifteen.

Martin did not go to school to amount to anything. His father was one of those queer Cherokees that did not believe in education. He taught that education was the cause of the betrayal of the Ridges and Boudinot in the east. Although there was a small school within a mile of his home he never went to school a month in his life. Martin was a born farmer. He liked the work and was a very successful farmer after he grew to manhood. At allotment time he allotted this same old home place where he was reared. He now operates about eighty acres.

(CHURCHES)

The Old Peavine Baptist Church was the first Cherokee Church that was established in the Cherokee Nation. This was on a small creek called Peavine. I don't know how long ago that church was established but when he got old enough to recollect anything this was already a well-established church. This was the church that the Blackwoods attended. Some of the old-time preachers that he remembers are Nelson Terrapin and John Jones, a white man, who was a sort of a missionary to the Cherokee people.

This house was of log construction. It had four large rooms and a large chimney in the center. Each room had a fireplace.

(CAMP MEETINGS)

They held Camp Meetings at this place every year. Annually there would be thousands of Cherokees gather here for the services. These Meetings would last about three weeks. The food

was prepared on the grounds by some of the Cherokees. Teers were killed at this Meetin, to furnish meat for the visitors. He has seen as many as forty people baptized on Sundays at these services. There were not many preachers.

(DAILY FOOD)

The Cherokees ate almost the same food daily. This consisted of bread, usually Bean bread, beans, wild meats, and some kinds of fruit usually dried fruit for the canning of fruits were unknown to the Cherokees at that time.

Bread and meat was the chief food among the Cherokees at that time. Meat was aplenty in the woods in the way of squirrels, rabbits, deer and wild turkeys. The turkeys were to be found in droves in the wood. Deer was also found the same way. Some of the Cherokees dried their deer meat and kept it as they did their hog meat.

The woods were full of wild hogs that anyone could kill if he had a claim. It was a man's laziness if he did not have any meat. Hogs were not sold on the market much for there were no buyers in the Cherokee Nation. The only buyers that came to the Nation were the Arkansas white men who came through the country buying stock. They did not come often. Hogs were not like cattle they were easily sold. People took more care of their cattle than they did their hogs. Cattle did not run at large as did the hogs.

(DYE AND PAINT)

These two necessities were made from the roots of weeds and

the bark of trees. I just don't know how they were made. The Cherokees did not paint up their bodies like the other Indians did at any time.

The only dyed articles I ever saw was their yarn they made their stockings with. Some painted the chairs that they made at home.

(MEDICINE)

All of the medicine used in the Cherokee doctoring was found in the woods. Herbs were used to certain extent but most of the doctoring was done by the use of fire.

There were not so many diseases in the Cherokee Nation before the white man came. People had Chills which was about all the disease there was. Sometimes a death would occur from Consumption. Some people call this Tuberculosis now. They claim this can't be cured now. This was the only disease that the Cherokees dreaded. When any Cherokee had this he usually gave up at once.

The Cherokees were very particular with their medicine. They would not doctor just everybody.

(INDIAN CHAIRS AND BASKETS)

Chairs and baskets were the only articles the Cherokees made that could be sold for cash in the early day. Many Cherokees were good chair makers. Among these were Mack Bullet who was considered the best chair maker in the Cherokee Nation. He lived on Dry Creek. Most all of the women made baskets at that time. They sold them

from ten to twenty five cents. They had to take them to Evansville and other Arkansas towns.

(FINANCING FARMERS)

The farmers at that time did not need much money. There was plenty of money in the Cherokee Nation although everybody did not have it. There were several men in this neighborhood that had plenty of money. Among the early day moneyed men were the walkingsticks who lived on the Walkingstick Mountain. They usually loaned money to their neighbors in case of urgent need. Martin Blackwood's father has borrowed as much as two hundred dollars without any security. Notes and mortgages were not yet known

(CATTLE AND CATTLEMEN)

The early day cattlemen were Jim and John walkingstick, Dick Wolfe, and Jonathan Whitmire. They all lived in this community. The walkingsticks handled more cattle than Whitmire. They usually marketed their cattle at Ft. Smith.

Driving cattle was a great sport in those days. Martin has helped several times in these drives. The walkingsticks were peculiar Cherokees--they would not receive their pay in green-backs. They usually demanded the silver and gold for their pay. Many times the Blackwoods have helped them bring the money back to the Indian country. Large sums of money were usually kept around the house. There were no hi-jackers in those

days among the Cherokees. Everybody was honest.

(GAME AND FISH)

Game was plentiful in those days. There were no game laws to prohibit any one from hunting. There were all kinds of game in the woods. Deer was found in droves. Turkeys also went in droves of thirty or forty. Wild meat was the chief food among the Cherokees. The Cherokees were good hunters. They knew how to hunt. Same way about their fishing. They knew where to fish to catch the fish that they liked.

(HORSE RACING)

This was a gambling game at that time. Watt Sanders and a man by the name of Dudley were the main Race men at that time in this part of the Goingsnake District. Sanders lived near the town of Proctor now. Dudley lived on the prairie north of Westville.

The only big race Martin ever witnessed was the race between Watt Sanders and a man from Arkansas. This race was run on a small prairie near the old Court House site on Baron Creek, now near the Whitnire School house in Adair County about 1890. Sanders beat this man. At this race Martin saw a Cherokee lose everything that he had to bet. He lost his saddle, spurs, hat, and all the money he had.

The Starr boys had a Race mare, the fastest horse west of the Mississippi River. They called this small mare "Gray Alice". Martin saw this mare after it was dead when she killed herself in a pasture

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in Joe Starr's place, now the Lizzie Duncan farm at Baron Creek.

(POLITICS)

The Blackwoods all belonged to the National Party. They were all against the Allotment law. Mr. Blackwood was eighteen years of age when he first voted in the Cherokee Nation. He remembers the voting precinct was located at Levine school. But the election was held outside under the shade trees. Everybody voted by calling the person's name that he wished to vote for.

(SECRET SOCIETIES)

There were no Secret Societies at that time among the Cherokees. The only Secret Societies that he ever heard anything about was the old Society called the Pen Indians. His father used to tell him this was organized back in North Carolina before the Removal. The old man Blackwood has told that this was organized by the grandfather of the Ridge boys who signed the treaty. By this Society they were hunted and killed after they came to the Indian Territory.

(SPORTS)

The main sports among the Cherokees at that time was Stalk Shooting and Rock Pitching. The Night Hawk Ball Game was also a favorite sport among that clan.