

TOM, SIMEON

INTERVIEW

#7212*

315

BIOGRAPHIC FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

TOM, SIMEON.

INTERVIEW.

7212.

Field Worker's name Johnson H. Hampton.

This report made on (date) August 16, 1937.

1. Name Simeon Tom.

2. Post Office Address Darwin, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: 12th October Day Year 1879.

5. Place of birth Twelve miles west of Antlers, Oklahoma.

Choctaw Indian.

6. Name of Father Emerson Tom Place of birth Doaksville, Fort Towson, Okla.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Montana Tom Place of birth Doaksville, Fort Towson, Okla.

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 5

TOM, SIMON

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Johnson H. Hampton,
interviewer,
August 16, 1937.

An Interview With Simon Tom,
(Choctaw Indian) Darwin, Okla.

I was born about twelve miles northwest of Antlers, in
October 1878; at the time I was born Antlers was in Jackfork
County, Choctaw Nation.

There was no railroad through the country until about
1880 when the Price's Railroad Company came through by my father's
name was Emerson Tom, and my mother's name was Martha Tom,
they did not come from Mississippi and they were raised near
what is now Fort Towson, then it was Darksville and was
located about a mile and a half north of Fort Towson. My
father moved to Jackfork County where I was born and he and
the mother lived there until they both died. Father died several
years before Mother died.

My father never held any office while he lived under the
Choctaw Government that I know of. I don't know anything
my grand father nor my grandmother for they both died
before I was born, and my mother nor my father never did tell
anything about this.

When father moved to this part of the country he and
mother put about five acres of land in cultivation where they

TOM, SIMTON.

INTERVIEW.

7212.

-2-

raised corn for their bread, and a small garden for their vegetables where they raised beans, potatoes, pumpkins and other vegetables. Father died when I was quite small so it was up to me to make a living for Mother and she and I both worked for other Choctaws for our living and we had a hard time getting by for there were no Choctaws that had anything much with which to pay you for the work, that is any money. They had cattle, hogs and other things but no money so when we worked we got a hog or maybe a cow to kill and if we got a cow we would kill it and dry it on top of the house and then we would have dried beef for a long time.

We did not have any cattle, hogs nor oxies and we depended on other Choctaws for our conveyance. We worked for a Choctaw named Moran Cole, a full blood who had plenty of stock and other things. Moran Cole would go to Paris, Texas, for his groceries and then he would pay us for the work we had done with flour, coffee and sugar. We had to save our flour for it was hard to get without money and money was something we could not get. In fact, the Choctaws in our community did not have much money; most of them had plenty of stock at that time but could not sell it for there was no market for stock

TOM, SIMON.

INTERVIEW.

7212.

-3-

and all they could do with them was to kill what beef they wanted and let the rest run out on the range.

Mother had a spinning wheel but she did not have a loom; she ran the spinning wheel for other Indians, who would come and hire Mother to spin for them, make threads out of wool or cotton, and then they would take them home and knit them into socks and mittens, and some of the Indians would hire Mother to make socks and mittens for them.

I never did see her make any clothes but she told me that she used to make clothes for them. I used to see her knit sock and mittens for other Choctaws but I don't know how much she got for making them; she would go out into the woods and get the bark of trees and roots and put them into a pot and boil them for a good while then she would dye the socks and mittens. Some were brown and some black with red and white stripes around them.

We lived on corn meal mostly; Mother would put the corn into a mortar or a block about three feet high with a bowl in the middle of the block and she would then beat it until it was made into meal. This meal was different kind than that which was ground at a gristmill. At that time we had no grist-

TOM, SIMEON

INTERVIEW.

7212.

-4-

mill in this country but after a few years or about the time the railroad went through and antlers was established we had a gristmill in antlers where we had our corn ground every Saturday.

Mother used to make baskets and sell them to other Indians who used them for sifting corn husks; there were four different kinds of baskets; one was for meal and one for hominy and one for small corn meal, that is, small corn meal which was like chops and one basket was for general use. The names of the two baskets in Choctaw was tanchiish-mahlich and tanchi ish yuhlich. I don't know what they would be called in English.

Mother made little baskets and sold them, but never made any pottery that I know of.

We are enrolled as Choctaw full bloods which we are.

In 1898, after the Atoka agreement was accepted by the Choctaws we filed on our land sometime in 1902 or 1903, and we had to go to Atoka, to select our land.

I understand that the first payment we had was made in about 1893 and was for \$103.00 per head.

TOM, SIMEON.

INTERVIEW.

7212.

-5-

I did not get mine but I guess my mother got it for me, then after Statehood we had some more payments and the last payment was for \$10.00. Since that time we have had no payment.

I never played Indian ball, that is, in match games but I have played in neighborhood games and I never saw an Indian war dance. My mother used to say that she danced the war dance when she lived at Doaksville, but she never danced the Scalp Dance. After the war the Indians quit that kind of dances and have never danced those dances since that time.

I am a full blood Choctaw Indian and my folks were all full blood Choctaws and we have lived with our tribe always. I never went to school at all in my growing up so I am not able to speak English nor write it neither can I read in my own language nor write it. I am just an ignorant, full blood Choctaw, Indian and I am now living about twelve miles west of Antlers.