

WILLIAMS, KATIE INTERVIEW.

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Billie Byrd,
Interviewer.
October 4, 1937.

Interview with Katie Williams
Okemah, Oklahoma.

"EARLY EDUCATION"

Education in the Muskogee or Creek Nation has been slow and gradual but there were many students who took advantage of the education offered in the early days by the government which set up schools especially for the training of the Indian child, not only in book learning but also in some manual training and trade. The boys learned farm work and such courses as were prepared by the teachers. The girls were taught sewing, cooking, housekeeping and other useful work. The usual nine months term was conducted with an average of twenty school days a month much as it is now.

Under the law of 1892 there was appropriated yearly \$76,468.40 for the use in the education of the children in the Muskogee or Creek Nation. Any child six years of age and not over eighteen years of age was eligible to enroll in the schools.

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Three divisions which were to be known as school districts were set aside and were known as the First, Second and Third districts. Muskogee and Coweta made up the First District, Eufaula and Newoka made up the Second District, while the Third District was made up of Okmulgee and Canadian.

Within those districts were three classes of schools; first was known as the boarding school; the second, the intermediate school; and the others were schools of higher grade. The intermediate schools were known as boarding schools where the students lived at the school and worked partly to help with the upkeep of the school. The officials of the schools were the ones who conducted them and who made the different rulings of the schools. These officials visited the school rooms at different times and gave encouragement to the students, who because they were unaccustomed to being away from home were often despondent and home sick. These school officials obtained the reports of the other intermediate schools every three months and these reports were submitted to the higher officials.

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The intermediate and higher grade schools employed as cooks any persons who would work for a less sum than that submitted by any other applicant for the position. Every employe of the schools would sign a written statement on oath that he would rightfully and faithfully render the services for which he was employed but whether or not he was accepted depended upon the approval or disapproval of the school officials and of the chief of the Muskogee or Creek Nation. The tribal treasurer made the payments to the teachers and other school employes. There were two schools for orphans, one was for the Indian children and the other one was for the colored children.

Every rule that applied to the Intermediate Schools was used in the conduct of these schools.

The Baptist denomination was to establish a school which any member of an Indian tribe could attend but the land was to be donated by the Muskogee or Creek tribe and the money was to be from the tribal funds. Should the school ever be abolished the land would then be returned to the tribal claimant.

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H. L. Morehouse; the Reverend Mr. J. S. Murrow; the Reverend Mr. Daniel Rodgers; professor A. C. Bacone; the Reverend Mr. Charles Journeycane, chief of the Delawares; the Reverend Mr. James Charles, ex-chief of the Choctaws; the Reverend Mr. A. L. Lacey, Cherokee; the Reverend Mr. John McIntosh, superintendent of Public Instruction in the Creek Nation, together with the principal chief of the Muskogee or Creek Nation were entrusted with the responsibility of selecting a suitable site for the school and the buildings.

In fact, the establishment of the school was left in their hands. This school was the one that is now known as the Bacone College which has become known as one of the largest Baptist church schools in Oklahoma for Indians alone. In the course of time, this school became the property of the Baptists but the students from many other denominations still attend the school that has made a name for itself.