

HATCHER, G. W.

INTERVIEW.

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Ida B. Lankford, Interviewer
October 11, 1937

Interview with G. W. Hatcher,
Sentinel, Oklahoma.

I came to Washita County from the Chickasaw Nation, April 9, 1892.

I filed on land six miles south and two west of Cloud Chief; here I built a dugout.

We were twelve days on the road; we came in covered wagons.

I raised corn, wheat, kaffir corn and cattle. Corn sold for ten cents a bushel; kaffir corn, thrashed, sold for fifteen cents a bushel. I had a sorghum mill and made sorghum for all the neighbors and other people for miles around. My part of the sorghum I hauled to El Reno and sold it for forty cents a gallon.

It would take me a week to go to El Reno and back for there were no bridges or culverts; no roads, just Indian trails. I plowed a road from where I lived to Cloud Chief with an old sod plow; there were no fences.

We had nothing here but a big prairie with sage grass and Indian trails. We had lots of prairie fires. One day I started to town, I saw a fire coming, so I

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drove into a place that had been plowed; it was about a ten acre spot and when the fire passed, I started on to Cloud Chief. I came across a wagon, boy and a pair of oxen, they were burnt to death.

I would freight for people and be gone ten days at a time; my wife and children would stay at home in the dugout doing the best they could. We did not have money in the old days.

We did not have schools nor churches when we came here but later after our settlement here, I gave land and a group of us men dug a large dugout and we had school; then later all of the denominations gathered at the dugout and had church. In the summer we built brush arbors and had our summer meeting under them.

We did not have doctors. If some one was sick we waited on him or her ourselves.

I served on the first grand jury in court during the time that the soldiers accompanied the United States Judge, John Buford, at the first court held at Cloud Chief. The soldiers guarded him closely during his eight-day stay there.

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There were a great many outlaws who attended the court at Cloud Chief but they did not start any trouble.

The first grand jury session was held in March, 1893, eleven months after the run. The court itself was held in an old sod school house and the grand jurors held their meetings in a dugout close by. There were fourteen on the jury and J. E. Baldwin was foreman, Tom Sappington, Grant Ledbetter and Lee Maddox were members of this grand jury.

There were several murder charges brought into the court but not enough evidence was shown against the persons accused so they were turned loose. The people did not have the right to hunt or get wood off of the Indians land.

~~Jeff Williams was accused of three murders but~~
he was tried at some other place, I believe it was at Watonga and he was acquitted.

I remember that Al Jennings and J. E. Pennick were two of the men who attended the trials at Cloud Chief which at that time was the county seat of Washita County.