

PHILLIPS, SARAH SCOTT. INTERVIEW #6251

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Margaret McGuire,
Interviewer,
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Interview with Sarah Scott Phillips
Artussee, Oklahoma

My mother was born in 1860, I do not know the month or day. She lived on a farm all her life. When grown she married Benjamin Phillips, who was a full blood Indian. Seven children were born to them. Four died when very small, two daughters and one son lived. The son died some few years ago. Two daughters are still living. Besides raising her own children she mothered several homeless children, but never adopted them. Her life mostly was devoted to her home and family. Her husband died on January 18, 1889, and she was left a widow with several children.

The principal food in those days was corn and wild meats. They would cook hominy with the backbone of hog or deer. They ate a lot of bear meat, too. They also ate coon, opossum and polecats. They did a lot of fishing and ate a great many quail.

Fruits were only eaten when fresh as they did not know how to dry or can them at that time. They

thought if fruit was eaten before breakfast it would make them sick. Sofka was used more for food than anything else.

Sofka is made of white or flint corn beaten, until all the husks are off the corn, with a wooden mallet. Then the husks are taken out and the corn boiled for a long time with a little lye made from wood ashes-no salt. Sometimes they would put hickory nut kernels in, too.

Blue dumplings are made from the white or flint corn: beat very fine; then sift out the coarse grits; make them out of the fine meal; parch the outside of a hickory nut shell very brown, or use bean hulls, cobs or corn shucks; beat these very fine; make out the dough in five or six inch rolls and tie up in shucks; put in water and boil until cooked through. The dry powdered hulls that have been beaten will keep for years. This is called "Spirit-Like Bread". The coarse grits that are sifted out are used to thicken soup made of chicken, quail or other wild game. Indians like wild game best.

Opuskey is made also of white corn; put corn in hot wood ashes and brown real brown, then sift out ashes, beat corn real fine and sift; mix with water and drink. No salt is used.

Eacheo: boil fresh green corn with the inner snuck on. When cooked, tie end of shuck together and hang up to dry. When dry, put away for winter.

Their medicines then were made of roots, herbs, grass and barks from trees. Sassafras was used for killing infections. Peach leaves and bark were used for boils. Peach leaves were used to break up chills and fever. Life Everlasting, a weed, was used for coughs and colds. Trailing King, a weed, was used for backaches, headaches; drunk before breakfast to make you vomit and cleanse your system for the day. They drank it before the stomp dances. Jerusalem weed was used to expel worms. It was given to children. Butterfly weed was given to cure tuberculosis. Rabbit grass was given to cure yellow jaundice, also given in confinement cases. Buffalo

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weed taken before breakfast made you grow strong.

My mother, after her second husband's death, was a missionary to the Creek Indians for three years. Before her death she married William McComb (Uncle Billie) as he was called by everyone. She died the year of 1911. Her last husband died January 30, 1930.