

ROGERS, WILLIE F.

INTERVIEW

#7038

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Interview with Willie F. Rogers
by Field Worker, Etta D.
Mason, Atoka, Oklahoma.
July, 1937.

Willie F. Rogers, a Choctaw, was born December 15, 1874, and was sheriff during Territorial days. He was also county coal weigher of Jack Fork County in 1893, treasurer and clerk of the same county in 1895, and road overseer in 1904.

His father, B. F. Rogers, allotted land north of Atoka and with the allotments and land purchased by the Rogers family since the allotments, hundreds of acres belong to the family at the present time.

The old stage coach line passed through Willie F. Rogers' home farm.

Willie F. Rogers has always been prominent in the building of Oklahoma.

Mrs. B. F. Rogers, mother of Willie F. Rogers, was born in Mississippi, in 1854. She came to Oklahoma when a child and grew up with the country.

This country was held in common and all had equal rights.

We had regulations in selecting our places to live, but we were allowed all the land needed by each family, and we were allowed all the stock needed, but

our renters were restricted in stock. Our renters also paid a permit to live on our land. The money was used to help pay the National expenses.

Our Principal Chief was elected by our tribe and was paid a salary. We had our upper and lower Houses of Council. We also had county courts and county judges.

Our district court was held at Pigeon Roost, thirty-five miles east of Atoka.

The Capital of the Choctaw Nation was Tuskahoma.

The Indians were never wild and unruly, nor did they wear blankets, in this part of Oklahoma.

As I grew older and married, many changes were made in this county. The railroad was doing business and great improvements were being made. Ranches were established and the cattle industry was on the boom.

I have seen thousands of cattle pass over the old Chisholm Trail, which passes through Atoka. Another trail, over which cattle were driven, passed northeast from Atoka through Stringtown. It was always an event when the herds of cattle passed on the cattle trails.

There was a cattle trail west of Atoka in Bryan or Marshall County. I only passed across it twice, but I remember very distinctly the jolt of the wagon as we passed over the many little trails. It was called the Seven Trail and was said to be ten miles wide.

My husband and I helped in the building of Atoka. We were pioneers of Atoka and were missionaries, doctors, and teachers in many instances.

We knew Captain Stanley and family, and have visited at their home.

At the Stanley or Flint home (before Stanley bought the farm) there is an old Indian Cemetery that has been plowed over for years.

OATH OF OFFICE OF WILLIE F. ROGERS
FOR SHERIFF

Jack Fork County, Choctaw Nation.

I do solemnly swear (or affirm as the case may be) that I will support the Constitution of the Choctaw Nation, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge to the best of my ability the duties of the

office of Sheriff of Jack Fork County, Choctaw
Nation, according to law, so help me God.

(Signed) Willie F. Rogers

Sworn and subscribed to before me this first day
of October, 1896.

W. J. Bond

County Probate Judge,

Jack Fork County.

COMMISSION

The Choctaw Nation

To all whom these presents shall come, greeting.

Know ye that Willie F. Rogers has been duly elect-
ed sheriff of and for County of Jack Fork, in the
Choctaw Nation, on the fifth day of August, A. D. 1896.

Now, therefore, I, Jefferson Gardner, Principal
Chief of the Choctaw Nation, by virtue of the authority
vested in one by the Constitution and laws of said
Nation, do hereby Commission him, the said Willie F.
Rogers, in and for the office aforesaid for and during
the term prescribed by the laws of said Nation.

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He, the said duly elected Willie F. Rogers, is therefore hereby authorized and required to do and perform all and singular, the duties incumbent on him, as sheriff, in and for the County aforesaid, according to law and the trust reposed in him.

In testimony whereof I have hereto set my hand and caused the seal of the Choctaw Nation to be affixed at Tuskahoma, this tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-six.

By the Principal Chief, Jefferson Gardner

J. B. Jackson, National Secretary, Choctaw Nation.