

McCOY, JOHN K,

INTERVIEW

#7729

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Interview with John K. McCoy  
Adair County, Oklahoma.

John K. McCoy was born in Mississippi, July 6, 1865. His father was John C. McCoy, a white man, and his mother was Nancy Cooper, a part Cherokee woman.

(EARLY LIFE)

When McCoy was five years old the family moved to the Choctaw Nation in the west. They remained in the Choctaw country until 1875, then the family moved to the Cherokee Nation. They settled after arriving in the Cherokee country near Sallisaw in the Sequoyah District. They moved on the farm of a prominent Cherokee named Tom Blair. Sequoyah, the inventor of the Cherokee Alphabet, had lived on this farm several years earlier. This farm is in the northern part of the present Sequoyah County near the village of Akins, Oklahoma.

Several years after arriving in the Cherokee Nation, Young McCoy married the daughter of a permitted white man named Green. He has lived in the Cherokee Nation since.

(EDUCATION)

McCoy did not receive an education in the Cherokee

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Nation for he was not allowed to attend school in this country. He was sent to school in Arkansas. He stayed with some of his folks in what is now Crawford County. He managed to complete the sixth grade.

(FARMING)

People did not farm as large farms as they do now. A farm of twenty acres was considered a large place. Tom Blair operated about fifty acres - he was one of the few well-to-do men of that time. He owned cattle, horses and hogs; and a good farm on the prairie. The principal crops were corn and oats. Wheat was also raised to some extent, not much for there was no machinery to take care of the crops. Thresher machines were almost unknown in this country.

(TRADING AND MILLING POINTS)

Van Buren, Arkansas, was the chief trading point for the Cherokees in this part of the Cherokee Nation. This was already a good size town at that time. Saturday was a busy day at this place.

There was a small grist mill located near the

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Natural Dam on Big Lees Creek about that time. People did not go to this place much at that time.

(OLD TIMERS)

Among the Old Timers that lived in this country was Obi Beng, Tom Blair, Alex Ross and Toy Seabolt. The last named family was also a prominent family. They were early day politicians. Josiah Seabolt was elected sheriff of Sequoyah District several terms.

(SPORTS)

The chief sport of the Cherokees at that time was the match shooting for turkeys. Many of these were held in the community.

(POLITICS)

Politics among the Cherokees was very interesting although our family was not allowed to vote. They usually had fights at these elections. There were only two parties in the Cherokee Nation. The Blair people were strong Nationalists. So were the Seabolts. Some of the Benges were Nationals some were Downing. The three families

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named were all brave men. They had several killings over the elections.

Alex Ross was a descendant of Chief Ross. He was a strong Nationalist in this district.