

SMALLWOOD, ANNA McCLENDON. INTERVIEW 9819 187

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INTERVIEW

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LEGEND & STORY FORM

188

W. P. PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field worker's name Robert H. Boatman

This report made on (date) January 26, 1938

1. This legend was
received from (name) Mrs. Anna McCleendon Smallwood.

Address Route 1, Washington, Oklahoma

This informant is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe Choctaw

2. Origin and history of legend or story _____

Place of early customs of Choctaw Tribe _____

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____

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Robert H. Boatman
Investigator
January 26, 1938

Interview with Mrs.
Anna McClendon Small-
wood, Route #1, Wash-
ington, Oklahoma.

As a native of the Indian Territory, a full-blood Indian of the Choctaw tribe, I was born May, 1871, in the Choctaw Nation, near the old town of Bok chito, one of the very oldest Indian villages of the old Choctaw Nation. We, as a tribe of our own people, knew nothing at all then of the customs of white people and only the customs of our own people were used. The Choctaw tribe of Indians have always been a very peaceful tribe of people, remembering at all times that honesty was the best policy that any one could ever attain. This particular tribe has many times been misrepresented in many ways. Of course, the tribal customs were very different from what they are of today. However, conditions were so very different. The Indians, especially the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes, lived,

SMALLWOOD, ANNA McCLENDON

INTERVIEW

9819

-2-

generally speaking, in small settlements. This was considered to be necessary in order to help one another, since a Settlement was not nearly as likely to be raided by some hostile tribe. The Comanche tribe was considered to be the more hostile. Many members of our tribe owned many head of horses, now known as Indian ponies. Our early day homes consisted mainly of what would now be called log huts. The furniture then consisted of little to none; blankets and skins of deer were used principally for clothing. Most all shoes were made from deer hide and were moccasin style. Of course, the Indians knew nothing about work in the way of manual labor, it was thought that food and clothing were all that were necessary as to the welfare of our people and so were very contented. Turkey, deer and fish were in abundance and the people were very fond of these foods. The men generally kept a good supply on hand, which was prepared by the women, in various ways. Sometimes meat was cured in practically the same way as meat is cured now. Again, a venison

SMALLWOOD, ANNA McCLENDON

INTERVIEW

9819

-3-

would be hung to some limb and there it would be smoked till it was thoroughly dried and cured, this was known as the drying method of curing. It was smoked for several days with various barks of wood which would give the meat a very delicious flavor. The Indian food consisted largely of wild game and Tom Fuller. This was prepared from meats and dried corn. The only crops raised by the Indians in early territory days were small patches of Squaw corn, called Tom Fuller corn and later named Squaw corn because the Squaws, or women, did all the raising of this particular crop. I lost my parents at a young age and was raised an orphan by kinspeople of my tribe. I grew up and always lived among my own people, attended school and secured my limited education at the old Sacred Heart Mission, in the Chickasaw Nation. I was enrolled as a full-blood Choctaw Indian by the Dawes Commission at Indians and allotted 210 acres of land in the Chickasaw Nation, some two miles west of where the

SMALLWOOD, ANNA McCLENDON

INTERVIEW

9819

-4-

town of Washington now is.

After being married to a white man, an early pioneer, we settled on the land that had been allotted to me and then entered into the business of stockraising and further development of agriculture. There many happy years were spent; business progressed nicely. Then my husband, Mr. J. L. McClendon, was shot and killed taking away the many pleasures that come in life. Here at my home where so many years of my life have been spent and in sad memory of the happy past I will remain all the rest of my days.