

TAYLOR, LOUIS.

INTERVIEW

5958

250

TAYLOR, LOUIS.

INTERVIEW

5958

Gus Hummingbird,  
Field Worker,  
May 24, 1937.

Interview with Louis Taylor.

I was born March 14, 1856, in Goingsnake District, near the old Taylor Springs as it was called, which is now the present Biddings Springs. My parents were John Taylor and Jane Taylor who came from Georgia about 1838 and were the servants of Tom Taylor, a prominent Cherokee at that time. My parents settled on the farm of Tom Taylor near the present Bidding Springs and they lived there until their death. Both are buried in the small cemetery near this place. My mother died when I was yet very small and my father died when I was about twelve years of age. After their death Mrs. Tom Taylor took and raised me as her own child.

I was taught at a very early age to work, learning everything that went with the farm, so I was a good farmer, blacksmith, mason and carpenter. I could make almost anything and became an expert on making plows. I could shoe a horse when I was twelve years of age. I used to work a yoke of oxen at the Taylor farm and I broke several teams of oxen for the neighbors.

TAYLOR, LOUIS.

INTERVIEW.

5958.

- 2 -

While my parents and I were living on the Taylor farm we lived in a small hut about a quarter of a mile south of the present Biddings Springs water mill. The house was of log construction with a dirt floor, no windows and only one door.

We only had very few pieces of furniture and we made our bedsteads by boring a hole in the wall and then driving a pole into this hole. Then a pole was set in the ground about four feet from the wall that this pole was fastened to and this served as a bed. The slats were hewed from poles to a thickness of about one inch and there were no springs.

The cooking was all done on the outside on a chunk fire and we ate the simplest food of that time - bean bread, beans and pumpkin were our daily diet. We had very few cooking vessels. Most of the food that we now use was not known to the Cherokees; such foods as sugar, coffee, pepper and all of the fruits such as grapes, strawberries, raspberries and pears were not known at that time. Wild apples grew on the mountains, also dark red peaches called Indian peaches. This fruit is now out of existence.

TAYLOR, LOUIS.

INTERVIEW.

5958

-3-

Louis Fields is my real name but after the death of my parents I went by the name of Taylor and am called by that name to this day. Most of my early life was spent on Mrs. Taylor's farm. I worked there several years but after the War she had another man to manage her affairs on the farm and this new boss and I did not get along very well so at last I left and went to live with my friends among the Cherokees. At this time I was about twenty years old and I made my home with a Mr. Youngwolf, a full-blood Cherokee, who lived in what is now called England Hollow.

#### Education and Churches.

I did not receive any education as I was not allowed to go to school at that time. There were no schools near my home for children other than Cherokees. The only school that I knew anything about was located in the Wolfe Settlement near the Spade Mountain that was later known as the Mulberry School. Here the Cherokee children from the community in which I lived attended school.

There were not any churches near this place at that time. The only church that I attended that I remember

TAYLOR, LOUIS

INTERVIEW

5958

- 4 -

anything about was the church located on Sugar Mountain in Tahlequah District.

The Taylors were church going people and Mrs. Taylor would take me along for company to this church on Sugar Mountain. Many Cherokees would gather at the home of old Dave Catron, a Cherokee, and here was where the meetings were held.

John Flute and Nelson Terrapin were the early day ministers at this place. This was about 1866.

The old Timers who lived at that time as our neighbors were John Looney, Lacie Wolfe, John Wolfe, Arch Christie, Watt Christie, Arch Scraper, Charley Scraper, Jesse Sanders, Nick Sanders and Sam Sanders.

#### Civil War

I was six years old when the Civil War began. I remember well when Mr. Taylor, my master, joined the Army. My father was left to work the farm when Taylor went into the Army. About 1863 Mr. Taylor was killed near Fort Gibson and is supposed to have been buried in the Fort Gibson National Cemetery.

TAYLOR, LOUIS

INTERVIEW

5958

- 5 -

The only battle that I know anything about was the battle that was fought near the present village of Welling. This battle was fought about three miles southeast of this little place. A group of Home Guards routed a small detachment of Confederate Scouts who had entered the Indian Territory and were stealing everything that they could carry away. According to Arch Scrapper, who was a Captain of a group of Home Guards, a few men were killed in the skirmish. The Confederates were driven out of the Cherokee country.

#### Trading Posts and Towns

Tahlequah, a very small place, was the nearest trading post for the Taylor family. This was about twenty miles away.

Dutch Mills, over in Arkansas, was another trading place for the family. This town was about twenty-five miles away <sup>and</sup> was their milling point. For corn milling they would go to the small mill operated by a Mr. Stephens on Coney Creek near the mouth of Leach Hollow about three miles west of Stilwell. This man Stephen was a permitted white man in the Indian Territory.

TAYLOR, LOUIS

INTERVIEW

5958

- 6 -

Foods and Clothing

The food that was found on almost everybody's table at that time was bean-bread, dried Pumpkin, honey, beans and sweet potatoes.

Those who served the government during the War, could afford such foods as coffee, sugar and fruits, but the poorer class of people did not eat foods like that. The only coffee I knew was the kind of coffee that Mother made before she died. Here was the way they made coffee. Corn bread crust was burned into a crisp, then broken up in small pieces and put in boiling water. It made a very good drink, the old Times called it "Home-made" coffee. Bean bread was made from corn bread mixed with beans. It made the bread a dark color. Almost everybody had honey-there were plenty of bees and bee trees were robbed every year. Sugar was made from the sap of the maple trees. Most of the sugar that was in the community was made on Sugar Mountain. That was why it was called by that name.

All of my clothing was made at home then. My

- 7 -

father was an expert in making cloth. He had worked in a cloth mill in Georgia before he came to the Indian Territory.

Salt was made in Sequoyah District where Salt Springs were found. The Cherokees from the Flint and Goingsnake Districts would go down there and stay for weeks at a time making salt and would bring back several sacks which they sold to their neighbors for something that they needed and did not have. These Salt Springs are located in about the northeastern corner of Sequoyah County. Some kind of mineral was also found near this place at that time. Joe Wolf was the noted salt maker of that time and he made a living this way.

When the Cherokees permitted Mr. Bradley the man who built the present water mill at Biddings Springs, he was a sorghum man. He was the first man to plant sorghum cane in the community. When he made the sorghum that fall he sold more of that than he did anything he had in his little store. The first Cherokee who made sorghum was Charley Jumper and he became a sorghum king.

TAYLOR, LOUIS

INTERVIEW

5958

- 8 -

Game and Fish

Game of all kinds were to be found at that time. The streams were full of all kinds of fish. Fish poisoning was the favorite sport among the Cherokees. Among the early day kings in this sport were Ben Squirrel, Mr. Peachester and John Hair. In the Tablequah District there were the Nofires. One time they put one hundred bushels of "Buck Eye" in a hole in the Illinois River just below the present town of Watts and the fish died for about eight miles. There were about two hundred at this poisoning. Camps were pitched on the banks of the river. Scaffolds to dry the fish were built by the women. They remained on the river for about three days and got enough fish to last them about three weeks. Fish would keep if it was dried.

I remember one bear killed in the Cherokee country. It was killed on Spade Mountain about 1867, by Alex Wolfe, a Cherokee. Deer could be found just anywhere and wild pigeons would come every fall. Thousands of them have been killed. The most noted pigeon roost was located north of Westville.

TAYLOR, LOUIS

INTERVIEW

5958

- 9 -

Cattle and Cattlemen

The earliest cattleman in this part of the country was a man named Bee Hunter who lived on Caney Creek below the present Wauhatchie Post Office. He owned several head about 1870. Mrs. Taylor bought a steer from Mr. Hunter. After I left Mrs. Taylor, about 1874, and came to Mr. Youngwolf's to make my home, John and Jim Walkingstick were the leading cattlemen of that neighborhood. I paid for a heifer at Walkingstick's by pulling fodder in about 1875.

U. S. Marshals

I have served as deputy sheriff several times and have been personally acquainted with several U. S. Marshals of an early day. Among these were Heck Brunner of Siloam Springs, Jim Ramey of Fayetteville, George Morris and John Kirk of the Indian Territory. I took an active part in the capture of Ned Christie.

I was better acquainted with Charley Copeland than any of the others, having been with Charley on several trips trying to capture Waco Hampton.

TAYLOR, LOUIS

INTERVIEW

5958

- 10 -

Outlaws

Walker Bark was the only real outlaw of the early days. He killed Johnson Reese at the home of George Reese near the present village of Proctor. Walker went to Mexico and remained for about five years but finally he was arrested at Fort Smith by a U. S. Marshal. Zeke Proctor was Sheriff of Goingsnake District at that time. He deputized John Looney, Mush Watt and George Christie and we and I went on horses to Fort Smith after Walker. We brought him back to the Indian Territory to be tried. He was convicted and sentenced to hang. I was his guard all the time before his trial and when sentence was passed on Walker he wanted me to take him to Tahlequah where he was to hang. We took Walker by night to the Tahlequah Jail.

Waco Hampton was a half-breed Cherokee whose father was Bill Hampton, a white man, and his mother a Cherokee. Bill Hampton, the father of Waco, was a permitted white man in the Cherokee Nation. He and Waco killed Bill's stepfather near the Holiness Mission at Rabbit Trap. Waco

TAYLOR, LOUIS

INTERVIEW

5958

- 11 -

scouted for several months after this but was killed by Ben Knight, Sheriff of Goingsnake District, and his deputy, Jim Thornton, near the town of Eldon,

Courthouse

The Goingsnake Courthouse was moved three times during Territorial days. At first it was located about a mile east of the present Whitmire School in Adair County.

Later it was moved to the place where the Proctor fight took place. After this fight it was moved to Peacheater Creek where it was when it was abolished.

The Proctor fight was a fight between some Marshals who wanted Zeke Proctor tried in Arkansas. They came to take him back and try him in Arkansas for the killing of a woman at Eli Wright's Mill on Dutch Mills Creek which was in the Cherokee Nation. There were about fifteen men killed and wounded in this fight. Among those killed <sup>were</sup> a Cherokee named Malone, Johnson Proctor, a brother of Zeke's, Judge Tom Alberty, Sut Beck and another Beck brother, whose name I do not recall. Among the old Timers who were present when this

TAYLOR, LOUIS

INTERVIEW

5958.

- 12 -

fight took place were John Looney, Aaron Goingswolfe, Mush Watt, George Falling, Joe Wilkerson and Mrs. Ollie Falling, who is still living at the age of ninety-three.

#### Sawmills

The earliest sawmill in the Cherokee country was the Williams sawmill which was located in Crow Hollow that is about three miles north of the present Titanic Post Office. This man Williams was a permitted white man. He was allowed to stay here because lumber was needed to build homes at that time.

The lumber in the house in which I now live came from this old mill.

#### Mail, Post-Offices and Newspapers

There were no newspapers at that time in the Indian Territory and no mail routes. The first post office I remember of ever hearing anything about was the Flint Post Office. The mail at that time was carried from Tahlequah on a horse. The first printed matter that I ever saw was a paper printed both in Cherokee and English.

TAYLOR, LOUIS

INTERVIEW

5958.

- 13 -

This was some time later, about 1887. They said that paper was printed at Tahlequah.

#### Allotment

I, myself, was not in favor of allotment for I had already built a home and was doing good. I had bought out an old Cherokee of his claim on a home, giving a cow and a calf for it and I still live on this place. When land was allotted my wife allotted this same tract of land.

#### Political Parties

I was a National in politics and voted for Bushyhead for Chief. Just before the allotment when the campaign was hot, I campaigned for Rabbit Eunch for Chief but he was defeated.