

JACOBSON, MARTHA E. (HAMILTON) INTERVIEW 13770

247

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An Interview with Martha E. (Hamilton) Jacobson, Tulsa.
By - W. T. Holland, Investigator.
April 28, 1938.

I was born in Madison County, Arkansas, July 8, 1872.

My parents were natives of Arkansas, my mother being a Bohanan before she married.

My father, William Hamilton, was a farmer and followed farming all his life. His experiences in the Territory, and mine, began in 1898, when we came over into the "Nation", leasing land from the Indians near Tahlequah. We lived there and farmed for three years, until 1901, when we went to the western part of the state, living among the Arapaho Indians. Chief Little Bear was a neighbor and friend of ours. He came to our home frequently, mostly to get something to eat, as he rarely ever came without eating.

These Indians were primitive and followed their old customs and habits. They lived in villages and when tired of one locality, they dismantled their tepees, loaded up their things and moved on to other parts of the reservation. I was afraid of them, however, without cause, as I never heard of them molesting anyone. They had a burial ground

about twelve miles west of Watonga where a great number of the Arapaho tribe were buried. They have peculiar habits regarding burial; everything belonging to the deceased was either buried with them or placed on the graves. I've seen baby carriages and rag dolls upon the graves of babies. At regular intervals they placed food and water on the graves for the deceased to eat. Of course, birds or animals almost always got the food and water, still the Indians seemed to think, or tried to leave the impression that the dead had returned and eaten the food.

Cotton and Kaffir corn were the principal crops and Kaffir corn a very important one. Corn didn't do so well out around Kingfisher, not enough rain, and often Kaffir corn was used for bread, but my parents parched it and made a drink from it, a substitute for coffee, and a pretty good one too.

The western part around Kingfisher, Watonga and Okeene was comparatively level. I know for I used to watch the trains approach. If the engineer was making smoke, you could see it for miles, so far away it looked like a toy train coming along, and it seemed a long time getting to you.

Not pleasant to relate, but the Indians were glad to take charge of all dead stock on the farm especially cattle. They would skin and cut up such animals, then carry them away for food. Often I have seen them eat the meat raw.

They were superstitious. Chief Little Bear told us that if they were moving from one camp to another and heard an owl hoot in front of them, they immediately turned and went the opposite direction. This was a warning that something adverse would happen to them if they continued on that way.

We few white settlers got together occasionally for socials, pie suppers, "play parties" and so on. We had preaching once a month by a circuit rider who usually had four places to preach, making the rounds each month

In school I reached the fifth grade. I have been living in West Tulsa twenty-three years and when I came here only a few houses had been built.