

RECTOR, CALVIN

INTERVIEW

8517

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field worker's name Robert H. Boatman

This report made on (date): September 14 1937

1. This legend was secured from (name) Calvin Rector

Address Byars, Oklahoma, R.F.D.

This person is (male or female) ~~XXXXX~~ ~~XXXXX~~, ~~XXXXX~~, ~~XXXXX~~

If Indian, give tribe Choctaw

2. Origin and history of legend or story tribal 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 4

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Robert H. Boatman,
Interviewer,
September 14, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. Calvin Rector,
R. F. D. 1, Byars, Oklahoma.

I was born August 11, 1873, near the town of Hugo in the Choctaw Nation and I was raised with the Choctaw Indians and in fact my Mother was a Choctaw and my father a descendant of people from the old country of Africa.

As I grew up the Choctaw Tribe was all I knew for there were no white people in that country while I was a boy and I have always lived among my mother's tribe of people, who were known as the Mississippi Choctaws and for this reason, I guess, I knew only the Choctaw Indians as my people, and my mother, I suppose, would never have left her people. The Choctaw people were much like the Chickasaws in some ways but very different in others.

The Choctaws were never quite so friendly toward the white people as were the Chickasaws, and it is generally supposed that the Choctaw Indians were the most carefree of all the civilized tribes. They did very little work in the way of farming; only a very small patch of corn was raised.

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Five acres made a big crop for a family and the women always worked the crops, which were cultivated with oxen. All the implements of farming we knew were home-made plow, stock, and ^abull-tongue plow, and ^atwisting shovel, which were used to break out the land. Squaw corn was raised altogether and I reckon the reason it was called Squaw corn, was because the women did all the farming and growing of it.

It was the custom that as soon as a boy was large enough to handle a bow, he was given a bow and a bundle of arrows and was taught to shoot with accuracy and, as soon as he was large enough, he was allowed to go out on a short small hunting trip of his own and he was always expected to bring in a "kill" of some kind, if nothing more than a squirrel.

The Choctaws always had a way of speaking of their women that seemed somewhat out of order to the white people, as the women were always referred to as "hə"; thus, the squaw he plant corn."

The new moon was watched very closely, for the Choctaws

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have always had and as yet have a great faith in the reading of the new moon as to its position. If the moon is directly flat on its back, it brings rain soon; and no Indian goes on a long hunting trip, though if it is very slanting the water has already been spilled and there will be no rain soon.

I recall about the first white men I remember was when I was a small boy, a few white men brought a cook along; they came over from Texas on a hunting trip and they camped on Boggy Creek and one morning, a band of Indians went over to the camp to investigate. All the men were gone out hunting except the cook; the Indians attacked and killed the cook, then they hid themselves until the rest of the men returned, then they killed every one of them and even their mules and dogs. A white man surely was not very safe in that part of the country then, and, if one happened to come through, he had to have a good fast horse or generally he didn't get very far.

Indian ponies were plentiful then; my father owned some two hundred head of wild ponies. Of course, they would be

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worthless now, though then a herd of wild ponies was a very
valuable possession.