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AS TOLD BY A PIONEER WOMAN

Interview with Mrs. Chas. McWilliams
5200 and East Eleventh - Tulsa, Oklahoma.

"I was born in LaMac County, Texas in 1866 -- Came to Oklahoma 1885. Three families of us went in together and took up a lot of land from Old Col. D. N. McIntosh in 1886. He owned everything around McIntosh Bend, eight miles from Eufala on the North Canadian. He was well educated. Had been to Washington. He wore his hair in braids except when he went to town, then he unbraided it and combed it so it would fly loose. His wife was a white woman but she didn't act like it, she had lived with the Indians so long. The daughter went to school in the East and married there. When the old man died, the wife turned everything over to the girl and her husband. They got mad at the man livin on one of the places and took a hoe and just natchelly beat him to death. That girl was a wild one. She'd ride by whistling like a boy. They put her husband in jail for life, but never done nothin to her.

"One night we kept hearin' a gun firin' up at the McIntosh's. My son went up to see what was the matter. It was the baby havin a bad spell of the croup. That was the way folks had of gettin' help in those days. If they didn't fire a gun they used a cow horn, you could hear it a mile or two. If you heard one in the night, you knowed somethin' was wrong.

"In them days when we lived eight miles from Hartshorne many's the time I've seen Indians go by all painted up and armed with guns. Fifteen or twenty in a gang, all mad at the pale faces, cause they were taking their land away from them. We'd get ready and go to town, be afraid to stay on the farm until they'd get calmed down. They never done much damage though,

What did we eat? Well, "Tom Fuller" was a favorite dish made by the Indians. This was made of corn. They put corn in a hollow stump, mixed it with wood ashes, then pounded it with a big mawl. I've seen 'em pound might-nigh all day. Don't know how they got it to look that away but it 'ud just be split in half pieces. We'd wash it and cook it all day. Another

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dish, I don't know what they called it, they use to bring it to me, was fixed out of Tom Fuller, red beans, and meat. It was made into balls, kept well. Indians used to carry great sacks of it when going on long hunts or marches.

As to amusements - used to have dances for the young people at different houses. Danced until they were out. Had a violin for the music and donw well to get that. Played regular old breakdowns. Never had no shows. Once a Magic Latern show came along. Had it in the church house. We thought it was the wonderfulest thing. Weddings were lots of times held outside under the trees, then a big dinner afterwards; roast pig with an apple in its mouth. Had thick china cups made without handles. Lots of the dishes was wooden, that is the bowls and spoons. We had squirrels for pets and so did the Indians. Kept them on long chains so they could run about and climb the trees. I've seen wild deer, nine or ten in a bunch across the road as we was going through the country in a wagon, and turkeys just gobbled all around us. I never saw no panther but there used to

be one come over the hills around McAlester and I'd hear it screamin' all night long sometimes, shure blood curdlin'.

"I went to one Indian funeral. Old Indian's daughter had died. He insisted that a white man dig the grave. I don't know what his notion for that was, but my husband dug it, and that was how I come to go. They put a knife and fork, spool of thread and pots of cooked pork in the casket with the body. One Indian made a talk at the grave. I didn't understand none of it. As they went away each person picked up a clod and threw it onto the grave. A little way off in the woods they had the feast, but I couldn't eat nothin'.

"Lots of people died of typhoid in those days. Get doctors if we could but old women that knew the use of herbs would do most of our doctorin'. Indians showed me a cancer plant. It grows up high in the Fall and has little yellow flower on it. Leaves and stalk grows and is kinda hairy. You put it on and boil it and it makes a salve, looks like sorghum

molasses; you needn't put nothin' else with it though.

An old man had a cancer on his nose and we put the salve on it and it was cured in less than a month. Old man Ames had a rose cancer on his nose and we hunted everywhere for the plant and only found a few leaves. So we put the leaves on and tied a cloth over it and kept it for a week. When we took off the poultice the cancer came off too.

"Yes, we used skunk oil for rheumatism."

"Never went to stomp dances but could hear 'em all night long. Once near Talihina, they had a stomp dance trying to cure an old Indian who had "consumption", they put him in a chair and danced around him. He died in his chair.

"What did we wear in those days? We wore full skirts and waists and lots of the time just mother hubbards. Had an everyday sun-bonnet and a Sunday one, it was white and cold starched. Used to sew the sun-bonnets on the little girls to make 'em wear 'em. I see'd a few silk dresses but never got to own one. Most houses didn't rags. Sometimes we'd get together and sew carpet rags and an old lady would weave them on her loom. We used

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candles until we got little brass lamps with handles. Thought we had a fine light then. Later, when the reflectors came in we were proud sure enough.

"Used to be a peddler come every Fall and stop at our house. We's always glad to see him. He was a jolly man and had the terriblest lot of things happen to him. Wore a navy blue suit. He'd pay me in goods. Carried a nice outfit and drove a nice rig. He was a red-headed Irishman and he come reg'lar for five years. We lived around the bend and couldn't see nothin' but we could hear those horses' feet and them buggy wheels. Oh yes, we'se always tickled to death to see the peddler. He stayed all night in a place one time, went to bed but things didn't look right and he got worried. He got up and slipped out, hooked up his team and left. About a mile along some one grabbed the horses by the reins but they were spirited and they got away. He found out afterwards that he had escaped from a pack of murderers.

"Once around Hartshorn, an Indian ball player and another Indian had a fight over a girl. The ball

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player killed his rival and married the girl. Indian law convicted him and sentenced him to be shot. He went on East to finish his contract to play ball. He took his wife with him and was gone for two years.

"When it was time for the execution I saw long strings of folks, whites and Indians, passing by. Goin' to see the shootin'. Some of them said he wouldn't show up. Others said it'ud be the first time an Indian had failed if he didn't. Sure enough, he rode in, flung his bridle down over the horse's head and said: "Here, I am." I never seen the execution but I was told about it by the folks who did. They stood the fellow up in front of the grave so that when he was shot he'd fall back in it. The Indian's wife stood with him and when they shot him, she took a little gun she had hidden on her and killed herself right there, too."

"Ghosts always turned out to be the wind. But one time I did see something. I will always wonder what it was.

"Near Alderson, on Peaceable Creek, there was a cemetery, folks said was full of ghosts. We went fishin'

and stayed all night in an old tumbled-down Indian cabin. Next day, my husband noticed an old shot gun about ready to fall to pieces restin' in a rack above the door. There was an old shot pouch with it. He took 'em both down and there was an Indian scalp in the pouch. It had been rainin' and the sun come out. I was a-settin' on the porch when a man in an army coat stood right in front of me. His face was shinin' all kinda light around it and then faded away. We got the horse hitched up and got away. It was a gentle old horse and the children was riding it while we sat in the wagon. Just as we got started going the horse got scared of somethin' - we couldn't tell what, and threwed the children. It all scared me and next day, the young man that was with us went back but couldn't find no tracks nor nothin'. I wonder what it was.