

ROACH, ADA M.

SECOND INTERVIEW.

6490.

344

ROACH, ADA M.

Recd.
SECOND

INTERVIEW.

6490.

Jerome Emmons,
Field Worker,
June 28, 1937.

Interview With Ada M. Roach,
Schulter, Oklahoma.

I was born on my grandfather's place at Tiger Flats, southwest of Okmulgee, on July 31, 1890. Mr. Johnson Tiger, now deceased, was my uncle. Mrs. Susan Tiger, who now resides at Henryetta, is my stepmother.

I am on the rolls as seven-eighths Creek and a member of the Big Cussetah Town. We always take our mother's town as our own. My mother died when I was quite young.

SCHOOLING.

I attended the Nuyaka Mission for six years and then attended the Bacone Indian University, now called Bacone College, for four years.

FARMING.

~~My father was quite an extensive farmer. He had a~~
section under fence at one time and had to plant crop in order to keep it so for the Muscogee or Creek law wouldn't permit land to be fenced unless it was in cultivation.

ROACH, ADA M.

SECOND

INTERVIEW.

6490.

-2-

GAME.

My father went on long hunting trips before his marriage, but only hunted locally afterwards. He went with friends and would camp and stay away for weeks. One time he got lost at night from the rest and wasn't found until late the next morning. He got lots of turkeys and deer meat, which was dried. I never cared much for the venison for it was usually dark, tough meat and I preferred other game.

The hunters, then, usually went on horseback, but if the nature of the land permitted they would sometimes take wagons.

We would go on fishing trips and use the Devil's shoe-string to aid in catching the fish. This plant is growing on my allotment and is so called because of the long, slender roots. We would dam up the river and get out in the water and pound the roots between two rocks. In a short time the larger fish would rise and the smaller ones die. They seem to go crazy and were easy to spear or shoot with an arrow which had a string attached which prevented loss of the

ROACH, ADA M.

SECOND

INTERVIEW.

6490.

-3-

arrow. In these killings, each person was allotted a certain number of bundles of Devil's shoestring to bring.

HORSES.

My father had about fifty to seventy-five horses. Of course, this number varied, as the herd was being added to and sold or stolen. He had lots of saddles stolen, too.

TRADING POSTS.

When I was a girl there were no trading posts and the nearest villages were Okmulgee and Watumka, where my parents traded.

EARLY OKMULGEE.

When I was about four years of age we moved into Okmulgee. We lived in Dr. Bell's house on Main Street. There were only the two stores, which were owned by Capt. Severs and Parkinson, a blacksmith shop and the post office, with Jim Roper as postmaster. A little later, a saddle shop was put in by Will Roberts, the Creek Capital Hotel established and still later, the Hightower Hotel, which was run by Lydia Hightower who married Mark Moore.

ROACH, ADA M.

SECRET

INTERVIEW.

6490.

-4-

FRIENDLY INDIANS.

The only Indians that I remember, when a child, were some Seminoles and Choctaws coming here to catch the stage coach, that ran to Muskogee. The Creek Capital Hotel was the meeting place for the coach and it ran to the Half-way Store, where it was met by another coach from Muskogee. They would exchange passengers, change horses and make the return trip.

STOMP DANCES.

In preparation for the Stomp Dances, the strongest young men of the tribe were sent out to gather roots for the medicine used. They weren't to take any tools or comforts with them, they were to sleep on the bare ground and dig the roots with their hands. The men would go off and drink the medicine on an empty stomach, change clothing after bathing, then sit down to a feast prepared by the woman. At night they began dancing; the men and women each had a leader. The men wore a feather and the women four turtle shells, which contained a few pebbles, on each ankle. The shells

ROACH, ADA M.

SECOND

INTERVIEW

6490.

-5-

aided the tom-tom in making music for the dancers who danced frequently all night.

The tom-tom or drum, was the only Creek musical instrument that I know of.

My father's town was Eufaula. They had a tom-tom made of a cedar root, which was supposed to have been brought here over the Trail of Tears, from Florida or Georgia. It was supposed to be kept by the oldest member of the clan for the dances and on his death passed on. It came into my father's possession and at his death it was hanging on the wall at our home. After the funeral it was gone and we never knew who took it. I had wanted to keep it. I suppose, even if we had kept it out of sight, as it was intended that it be kept, we would have been asked for it.

CREEK ORPHANAGE.

My grandfather, Moty Tiger, was superintendent of the Creek Orphanage northeast of Okmulgee for four years. My father, George W. Tiger, was superintendent four years and my uncle, Johnson Tiger, was also superintendent for four years. The members of the Creek Indian Board of Education, when my

ROACH, ADA M.

SECOND

INTERVIEW.

6490.

-6-

father was named superintendent of the Orphanage, were:
Ballard Valentine and Cheesy McIntosh. McIntosh's son,
Van Allen, now lives in Henryetta.

CREEK COUNCILS.

When I first remember, Pleasant Porter was the Chief
of the Creek Nation,
and my grandfather was second chief. The members of each
town voted on members of the clan to represent them in the
House of Kings and the House of Warriors.

After Pleasant Porter died, my grandfather was appoint-
ed by President Teddy Roosevelt to be Principal Chief of
the Creek Nation; this was after statehood and tribal govern-
ment had been abolished. My grandfather was called to Washington
and would sometimes stay for months at a time looking after
tribal affairs.

TRADITIONS.

I have been told that the old Creeks used to sleep
with their beds North and South, rather than East and West.
They thought that they slept better by going with the earth
and crossing, rather than parallel to, the earth's line of
travel.

ROACH, ADA M.

SECOND INTERVIEW.

6490.

-7-

The old method of making rain was to spank a turtle.

When children were bad, they were warned that the Honka man would mark their arms. He was about the same as the Bogey man is to the white children.

INDIAN NAMES.

My grandfather and his two brothers weren't named yet when they went with their father to cross a stream. One tried and he fell back, so they called him I-sluts-ka; one of the others tried and he fell in, so he was called A-sluts-ka; my grandfather was the first to cross, so he was called Ho-mo-Ti-a-gee. When my grandfather first went to school, the teacher couldn't pronounce his name so she changed it to Moty Tiger. Children were also named for missionaries, etc. Stoddard, out near Nuyaka, was named for a missionary.

CRAZY SNAKES.

I remember when they were taking the followers of Crazy Snake to Muskogee. There would be one Snake and one soldier. They cut their hair off there and I heard that.

ROACH, ADA M.

SECTION

INTERVIEW.

6490.

-8-

Chitto Harjo nearly cried when he lost his hair. Lots of people don't know whether Harjo is dead nor not. I have never heard of his death.

My uncle was a Snake Indian, that is he didn't wish to be allotted land. He, like the others called Snake Indians, wanted to be free to move anywhere he wished on the land owned by the Creek Nation.

BURIAL GROUNDS.

The Creeks always dug the grave the day of the funeral. They would always cover it with a tent or something to keep out the rain, if it had to be left uncovered. Sometimes they would burn wood in it until it was dry if it got wet despite their efforts. Many graves also have a sort of a dog house built over them. to keep the rain from the grave.

One of my friends said he saw Tom Chickasaw, when he was executed. He was put into the casket and shot and the casket lowered into the grave and covered.

BURIED TREASURE.

Mrs. Mary West told me that an Indian was supposed to have drowned two slaves, who helped him carry his wealth

ROACH, ADA M.

SECOND INTERVIEW.

6490.

-9-

to the river and bury it, when he went away to fight in the Civil War. He wanted it to be safe until his return, but he never returned, according to the natives around Hitchita where it is supposed to be buried, many of whom have looked for this hidden treasure without success.