

INDEX CARDS

Immigration--Cherokee Nation
Intermarried whites--Cherokee Nation
Permits--Cherokee
Houses--Cherokee Nation
Schools--Cherokee Nation
Grist Mills--Cherokee Nation
Grist Mills--Creek Nation
Sawmills--Cherokee Nation
Stage routes
Bacone, A. C.
Farming--Cherokee Nation
Wealaka;
Porter, Pleasant
Ferries--Arkansas River
Goose Neck Bend Community
Ferries--Verdigris River
Ranching--Creek Nation
Ranching--Cherokee Nation
Turner, Clarence
Severs, F. B.
Halsell, Hale
Trails
Texas Trail
Schools--Creek Nation
Cemeteries--Creek
Cemeteries--Cherokee
Muskogee
Railroads--Missouri Pacific
Hotels--Creek Nation
Springs--Cherokee Nation
Insane asylums--Cherokee Nation
Fort Gibson
Intoxicants--Cherokee Nation
Agencies--Creek
Agencies--Union
Finance--Creek Nation
Finance--Cherokee Nation
Indian trade--Osage
Trading posts--Osage
Payments--Osage
Hominy
Food--Creek
Newspapers--Muskogee

Interview with John McMakin
by
L. W. Wilson, Field Worker

Mr. McMakin was born at Marietta, Georgia in 1863 and moved to the Cherokee Nation in the Indian Territory in 1873 and located at Muskogee, Oklahoma the same year.

FATHER: William Jefferson McMakin, born in North Carolina in 1833, and died in Muskogee, Oklahoma, August 1899.

MOTHER: Adeline DeLaney-McMakin, born and died prior to my father's moving to Muskogee, Oklahoma.

My father married the second time, to Savannah Brown in the state of Georgia, which was a lawful and legal marriage but when they came to the Indian Territory they had to marry again in order to become citizens of the Cherokee Nation, which was in accordance with the Cherokee laws. In order for an Indian and a white man to marry, it was necessary to get ten respectable citizens by blood to the Indian, to sign a petition and then take the petition before the clerk of the Cherokee court of the Cherokee Nation. My father and step-mother had to secure a permit for those working for them to live here for which they paid six dollars a year, for awhile, and then finally nothing.

- 2 -

LIFE AND CUSTOMS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

At our arrival here, we found the country in a more or less delapidated condition and the people in general went about to rehabilitate their homes, schools, churches.

The houses were principally of log construction with shake-shingle roofs, with stick or rock fireplaces. Some of these cabins had dirt floors, other had puncheon floors; some had shuttle windows, some had no windows. The cracks were filled with mud. The school houses were of the same construction, while some few of the schools were of clap-board construction and had stoves in them instead of fireplaces. Church was usually held in the school houses, except in the summer time, when arbors were constructed of poles, limbs and leaves. The first schools I attended were the Nevins and the Frozen Rock school, which was about one-quarter of a mile north and a short distance east of the present Frozen Rock school. My teachers' names were as follows: Colonel Harris, brother of Red Bird Harris, who lived over and on the site of the old Fort Davis; Lucy Rogers, Tookah Thompson and Miss Nave. We were taught the English language.

We raised cotton, corn wheat, oats, but no melons. We would grind our corn with an old hand grader and sometimes we would take it to the grist mill, which was run by a Major Foreman, near the present site of the Selby Mills, now located in Muskogee. About the present location of Swift Packing Company, here in Muskogee, Major Foreman built a large pond, from which he would get his water to run the mill. He later put in a cotton gin and a flour mill and one day his arm was caught in the gin and was severely mangled and at this point he sold out, "stock, lock and barrel" and left for Texas.

I remember one time I went to mill, (an old water mill) which was located on the creek, south of the old Tahlequah jail and while I was there a terrible blizzard and snow storm came. Consequently, I had to remain there for several days.

When only a young man, I helped to haul lumber from Williams Saw Mill, located fifteen miles south and east of Tahlequah on Barron Fork Creek to build our home here in Muskogee and of course this was no little job.

Besides the school which I attended, there was the Nevins School, which was of log construction and that

- 4 -

school cared for the people in the community around Nevins Ferry and Plantation. It was located about a mile or such a matter southwest of the west landing of the Nevins Ferry of which I will mention later. This school has been abandoned and when they began to hold county fairs in the vicinity of Nevins Ferry, which was called Hyde Park, they built the present Hyde Park School.

When I was driving a stage coach as far as the stage stand, south of the present town McLain, just before reaching Webbers Falls bottom there was a Buck Horn School. This school was also of log construction and was taught by a Presbyterian preacher; I don't remember his name. At any rate my sister attended this school.

It was while I was engaged as stage driver in 1882 that I hauled Professor Bacone in my stage to Okmulgee, trying to find a location for his Baptist Mission. He finally settled in Muskogee and built his Mission at the present site of Bacone College.

Corn was selling in the early days for twenty-five and thirty cents a bushel and hay for three dollars and

- 5 -

a half per ton, that is loose hay, not bailed hay. The hay and grain was cut with a mower and reaper, owned in our neighborhood by William J. McMakin. When we wanted to mow hay we would take the reaper and shock the wheat and oats. A Mr. Lewis Dunback, who operated a horse thresher in the eastern part of the county, did the threshing in these days.

I have seen a tread-mill that was used to grind flour, prior to the one that was operated by steam by Major Foreman but I can't remember just where it was located. This tread-mill was operated with a horse. They built a chute, or you might call it a stall, that set in an up-right position at about forty-five degrees and the floor of the stall was something like an endless chain on which were cleats and as the horse would walk, the chain would move and under the stall were wheels which turned the mill.

STAGE LINES

I used to be a stage driver and the man who owned the stage line was O. B. Blackmore and operated from Muskogee to Fort Gibson and Tahlequah, made connections

with the stage line at the stage stand on the other side of McLain for Webbers Falls, made connections with the stage line at what we called the half-way stand near Cane Creek for Okmulgee and connections with the stage line, which came to the Stage stand at Sam Brown's store, near where Chief Pleasant Porter owned a farm, at that time we called it Wealaka. The stage stand on Cane Creek was operated or at least the man in charge of the stand was a Dr. Barnett. He fed the stage drivers and cared for the horses. The stage stand connecting with Wealaka stage was run by Sam Brown and the stage stand near the Buck Horn school was run by a Mrs. Taylor. Captain Jackson and Perry Brewer carried passengers between Muskogee and Tahlequah.

FORDS AND FERRIES

The Nevins Ferry was controlled, owned and operated by Mose Nevins and his wife Julia. Mose was shot near the east landing of the ferry and Julia continued to operate the ferry after his death. The east landing was on the east bank of the Arkansas river at the mouth of the Grand river and the west landing was on the west bank of the Arkansas river near the present Muskogee pump

station. The old Nevins home was located just south of the west landing and part of same is yet intact. It was of log construction.

The Rogers Ferry was controlled, owned and operated by the Rogers brothers, Connell, High and Alec Rogers. This ferry was located within the immediate vicinity of the present Frisco railroad bridge which crossed the Arkansas river just east of the present village of Riverside and Riverside is about four miles east of the city of Muskogee, Oklahoma. This ferry operated for quite a while but due to some altercation between the Rogers brothers the ferry was abandoned and at this time another ferry was put into take its place which was the McMakin Ferry.

The McMakin Ferry was located about one mile below the Frisco railroad bridge which crosses the Arkansas river as described in connection with the Rogers Ferry above. This ferry was controlled, owned and operated by myself (John McMakin) and brothers. I believe it was in 1905 that we discontinued the use of this ferry.

The Ross Ferry was controlled and operated by a man named John Newberry. This ferry was located at about where the present highway bridge crosses the Arkansas river on highway 62, Muskogee to Fort Gibson.

- 8 -

The Harris ferry was controlled, owned and operated by Red Bird Harris, It was located near the present MK&T railroad bridge which crosses the Arkansas river north of the city of Muskogee. I cannot say when Mr. Harris started the operation of this ferry but same was discontinued within a year or so after the railroad bridge was built.

The Smiths ferry was controlled, owned and operated by Junior Smith and a man by the name of Van Noy. This ferry was about two miles south and eight miles east of the city Muskogee and served what was known as the Goose Neck Bend Territory. This ferry crossed the Arkansas river at this point which is about eleven miles by river down the river from the present bridge on highway 62 on highway fr m Muskogee to Fort Gibson.

There was a ferry which crossed the Verdigris river near the present MK&T railroad north of Muskogee, but I cannot state the people's name who owned and operated same but I do know that it was discontinued about the same time that the Harris Ferry was discontinued which I have mentioned above.

The Foreman's Ferry was controlled, owned and operated by Bullet Foreman. This ferry crossed the Arkansas river

down the river from Webbers Falls, Oklahoma, near the mouth of the Illinois river. I can't recall now when the ferry was discontinued, however, it was in operation as early as 1877.

The Webbers Falls ferry was controlled, owned and operated by a Mr. Lynch and another party whose name I cannot recall at this time. At any rate Mr. Lynch owned the land on one side of the river and the other man the land on the other side of the river. This ferry was located near the present highway bridge which crosses the Arkansas river between Webbers Falls, Oklahoma and Gore, Oklahoma.

Rabbit Ford crossed the Arkansas river about one-quarter of a mile below the present Frisco railroad bridge east of the village of Riverside. The location of the present village of Riverside has been mentioned as to location in connection with the Rogers ferry. This was a very dangerous ford and could only be crossed when the river was exceedingly low.

RANCHES

The Nip Blackstone ranch was located southeast of the present city of Muskogee, on what is known as Spainard

Creek, which is near the present town of Keefeton, Oklahoma. Of course, it was all open range and he grazed thousands of head of cattle there yearly. The foreman of his ranch was Jack Dikes and his cattle bore the brand of "N.B."

The Clarence Turner Ranch was south and west of the present city of Muskogee and was along the route of my stage line which carried me to the half-way stand on Cane Creek. It was all open range and grazing of course covered many square miles. Tom Johnson was his foreman. I have visited on this ranch many times. Maybe I should have called this the 3 Bar Ranch as that is what it was known by far and near. They branded their cattle with 3 bars (≡).

The Severs Ranch was located near the present city of Okmulgee, Oklahoma, and owned by Captain Severs. I cannot recall the foreman's name. I do know that they branded their cattle with an "S. B."

The Hale Halsell Ranch was located northwest of the present city of Tulsa, Oklahoma, but I cannot recall the foreman's name or the brand they used.

The Jim Connelly Ranch was northeast of the present city of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and they branded their cattle with a single letter "C".

- 11 -

The 101 Ranch was located near the present city of Bliss, Oklahoma, and was owned by the Miller Brothers. It was considered one of the largest ranches in that particular part of the country. They had their cattle branded with "101". I suppose most people even in the late days have a complete history of this ranch as the Miller Brothers have become insolvent and more or less in litigation for the last five or six years.

I recall the Bluford Miller Ranch, The Half Moon Ranch and Alex Todd Ranch but I can't place in mind just now at this time all the details in connection with these ranches.

ROADS AND TRAILS

The Texas Road started on west bank of the Arkansas river near the Nevins Ferry as far as I know, and ran in a southwest direction, for about a mile and thence south passing within a quarter of a mile on the west side of the present village of Riverside, on over the hill by Honey Springs Tank on the MK&T Railroad and then followed closely to the railroad to the north Elk Creek where was located a toll bridge owned and operated by Mr. Jim McIntosh. This was as far as I ever traveled this road,

but I have driven cattle lots of times over this portion of the road.

The Tahlequah Road from Muskogee ran east out of the present city and connected with the Texas road at a point one-quarter of a mile west of the present village of Riverside, thence north and bearing to the northeast, crossing the Nevins Ferry, above mentioned, thence in a northeastern direction along the banks of Grand River, thence past (east) the present Frisco Railroad Depot at Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, and here northeast within a mile of the present National Cemetery at Fort Gibson, coming out within the close proximity of the present Perkins School and thence in a northeast direction coming out at the Manard Store and continuing into the other Tahlequah road to the old Gulager place and thence east to the Boys Seminary which burned in 1910, and then north about a mile and a half to Tahlequah.

I don't suppose that the roads we traveled to the half way place or stand on Cane Creek connecting with the stage coaches for Wealaka and Okmulgee are of any importance as sometimes we would travel first one road and then the other according to weather conditions and this is also true of the roads to the stage stand at the Buckhorn School.

- 13 -

Wealaka was a Creek Mission School at that time and was located near the town of Leonard, Oklahoma. Some of the teachers in the school were Professor Lockwood and Jacob Whitehead.

BURIAL GROUNDS

The Baptist Hospital now located in the city of Muskogee, Oklahoma, was the first cemetery that I recall and it was in 1902 or '03 that the graves were dug up and the remains were carted away to our present Green Hill Cemetery.

The first burial ground near the present Frozen Rock Cemetery was just a little north and east of the present cemetery close to the Arkansas river. In 1873 my father, W. J. McMakin and J. W. Jordon platted the present Frozen Rock Cemetery and I recall well the first man that was buried there. He was part Cherokee, if not a full-blood, and he worked for my father. His name was Dave Cordory, and he was a brother to a Mrs. Fox. He was buried there in 1874.

RAILROADS

The MK&T Railroad had just finished building into Muskogee when I came to the Indian Territory and it was

on this railroad that I traveled, arriving here in 1873. The depot was of frame construction and would have possibly at this time made a good cow shed, and it was located at about the present location of the MK&T Depot.

The St. Louis, Iron Mountain, and Southern railroad built through to Fort Gibson in 1887 and continued south to Fort Smith, Arkansas.

The St. Louis and San Francisco railroad, the Midland Valley railroad and the K&G railroad built into Muskogee in 1901, 1903 and 1907 respectively.

THE GROWTH OF THE CITY OF MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA

The first two hotels were owned by Mr. and Mrs. Major trokey and one by Mr. Mitchell. The first general merchandise store was owned by Mr. Patterson. The first Hardware store by Mr. Adkinson and the first butcher shop by Theo Lacey. The first postoffice was located at what is now second and Broadway and we called the postmaster Squire. I don't recall his correct name. The first church was a Methodist church and was located at the corner of Okmulgee and Cherokee Streets. The first jail or calaboose was built of logs and was in dimensions about 10 by 12 feet,

and was located on the present site of the Chestnut-Gibbons Wholesale House. The first barbed wire fence that was introduced in this country was northeast of the present city of Muskogee about two miles, on the old Fort Davis site by Red Bird Harris, around Red Bird's house and barn he set out small hedge but the rest of his ground was fenced with barbed wire. The first bank in Muskogee, if I am not mistaken, was located in the present Severs Block in about 1839. I can't recall the name. With the railroads built and being built into Muskogee and Fort Gibson, people began to come here it seemed from the four corners of the earth, and naturally the town had to provide more adequate facilities and continued to flourish until it made itself the present city that it is today.

CAMPS

The Rabbit Ford, that I have mentioned before, was a center for camping activities as people could come to the ford and camp for days, waiting for the river to go down so that they could cross and be on their way.

The Gulager place on the Tahlequah road, that I have spoken of, was a camp ground and it was at this point that people would rest on their way between Tahlequah and Fort Gibson. There was a good spring of water at this camp ground and all campers appreciated it. Some of the people who lived near the Gulager place was Ellis Rattlingourd, Pen Rattlingourd, Sis Hendricks, the Post Brothers, I can't call their first names, and Lady Duck and Tim Walker.

INDIAN TRAINING SCHOOL

The Indian Training School, now located on the Muskogee to Tahlequah Highway, was in its early days an asylum. I can't remember the date but I do know that I stayed there one night and tried to sleep but I had hard luck as the inmates created a commotion all night. The man in charge was Bob Wofford. If I am not mistaken, most of the inmates were Indians or of Indian descent.

FORTS

I knew of many forts in the Indian Territory by there was only one with which I was familiar, and that was Fort Gibson. Soldiers were stationed there when I

first came to this country in 1873, and I believe it was in 1889 that they abandoned the fort and it has remained so ever since. I used to haul Drummers over to Fort Gibson and there was a store that was known as the old Settlers store, owned by Captain Jackson. The Drummers always had to unload at this store to buy themselves some beer, incidentally the stage driver always came in for his part, too. They would not permit the sale of beer or any intoxicant to the Indians.

INDIAN AGENCIES

The first Indian Agency was a Creek Agency and was located on the south side of Fern Mountain, near the highway bridge known as the Spaulding bridge. At this time it was on what was known as the Fort Arbuckle road. In 1875 this Agency was moved to the present Agency Hill, or what is now the United States Veterans Hospital, and of course, we now have our Indian Agency in the Federal Building in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

MERCHANDISING

As I stated above, Muskogee had no banks until 1889

- 18 -

and the merchants handled most all the money. If a farmer wanted to borrow money with which to put in his crop or for any purpose for that matter, they would come to the merchant and mortgage whatever property that the merchant would accept and they would in lieu thereof issue them what they termed script and this script was used as a medium of exchange with the rest of the rest of the merchants and business concerns. Why they even used this script to pay their ferrage. There was in Muskogee what was known as Spaulding script. H. B. Spaulding had his picture on one end of the piece of paper which was about four and a half inches long, and the amount on the other end ranging from five cents to ten dollars. At Fort Gibson there was a man in the mercantile business by the name of Nash. I believe it was H. P. Nash, who issued script in the same way as Mr. Spaulding. It was green paper about the same size of the Spaulding script and on it was a picture of a dogs head and under this picture was the name H. P. Nash, and at the other end was the amount like the Spaulding script. The two towns being so closely connected, the Spaulding script was accepted by all business concerns

- 19 -

in Fort Gibson and likewise the Nash script (which the people called the dog head money) was accepted by business concerns in Muskogee. In a very short time scalpers began to buy this script at a discount as people would want real United States money as they would possibly have to make a trip to Okmulgee, Tahlequah or elsewhere and of course the script was of no value at these points. In a length of time the scalpers had bought up about all the script that was issued at all the way from fifty cents to ninety cents on the dollar and closed in on the Spauldings and Nash for their money and it came near bankrupting both of them. After the banks began to operate I remember a particular kind of money that we called Shin Plaster. It was paper the amount of which was ten cents.

MISCELLANEOUS

I recall that Mr. Spaulding and Mr. Joe Callahan constructed the present General Hospital but it was used at first for a school.

The first automobile which resembled a buggy was owned by Mr. Spaulding here in the city of Muskogee.

The first trading post and the only one of which I have any recollection was located at the present site

of Hominy, Oklahoma. It really was a site to see the Indians at this place ~~was~~ when the government would pay them off. They would buy anything that the white man had to offer as long as their money held out.

The Indians would make Canuchi. Canuchi was made of hickory nuts that were beat up in pestle bowls and run through riddles. They would grind their corn in these same bowls and pestles. With the meal, canuchi and salt they would make their bread. The Cherokees called it canahinia brea; the Creeks would call sophakia bread. They would also make bean bread and pumpkin bread. They would boil dry beans well done, stir it into the dough of the ~~canahania~~ or sophakia and bake. The pumpkin bread was made by making a batter out of the pumpkin and stir it into the dough as they did the beans.

I don't remember much about steamboats as far as names and captains were concerned. I used to see them loading and unloading at Nevins Ferry and know that they hauled cargoes, merchandise and like and that is about all.

While I was driving the stage the owner would not allow any of us to carry pistols or guns of any description and I never carried a firearm of any kind while employed

- 21 -

on the stage lines. When my father came to this country he brought with him what he called an old dragoon rifle, a cap and ball outfit and with a bullet mould would mould his own bullets. He later bought himself what he called a needle gun. It was supposed to be a long range rifle and it shot cartridges similar to the present day guns.

COMMENTS

Mr. McMakin weathered the life of the frontier days and is at the present time hale and hearty and does not appear to be any the worse for his activities in the making of Oklahoma what it is today and particularly the city of Muskogee and his every interest at this time is to see the city forge on and on making it one of the greatest and best cities in which to live, rear and maintain a family even though it never becomes a metropolitan center. The information that Mr. McMakin gives us is from his heart wishing to give to generations yet to come the benefit of what he did even in his humble way of developing the west as he did only as a stage driver.

Supplement to page 7, to interview with John McMakin.

George Zufall controlled, owned and operated a cattle ranch on what was known as Rattle Snake Mountain between Warner and Checotah. It was known as the Bar Z Ranch.

Mr. R. A. Evans' Ranch was located in the Brushy Mountains district, which is south and east of Muskogee, and was known as OO Ranch and his cattle were branded accordingly.

Lewis Jobe and Jeff Evans had a large ranch near the present Chimney Mountains, which is near the present village of Summit. Part of his cattle were branded OX, this being the brand of Mr. Jobe's and part of the cattle were branded J. N.

Will Chote owned a ranch near Tebbers Falls and my brother-in-law, John Thompson, was the foreman of this ranch. It was known as the Flying Ranch and the cattle were branded with the flying .

CC:

E. J. Phelps
John McMakin

Supplement to Page 10 of interview with John McMakin.

The name of the first newspaper of which I can remember, in the city of Muskogee, was the Indian Journal and the editors were the Roberts Brothers. This newspaper office was located between Broadway and Okmulgee on Main Street.

The first blacksmith shop was operated by George Zufall and was helped in the shop by his brother, Otto Zufall. The shop was located on South Main Street.

The first barber shop was owned by Bill Brown and he had no one to help him. This was a little 10 x 12 box house between Okmulgee and Broadway on Main Street.

The first drug store was owned by Cummings and Williams and was located between Broadway and Okmulgee on Main Street.

The first saddle and harness shop was owned by Dave Andrews, who was part Cherokee Indian, and this, too, was located on Okmulgee Street between Main Street and the MK&T Railroad.

CC:

E. J. Phelps
John McMakin

INDEX CARDS

Miami
Miamis
Indian Trade--Miami
Agencies--Quapaw
Payments--Miami
Family Life--Miami
Family Life--Neosho
Ferries--Neosho River
Ferries--Spring River
Fords--Spring River
Schools--Quapaw
Missions--Quapaw
Newspapers--Miami
Schools--Miami
Churches--Miami
Saloons--Miami
Social Gatherings--Miami

INTERVIEW WITH LEVI LINCOLN MCMANAMAN
(pioneer) KNW, Miami, Oklahoma.
FIELD WORKER, NANNIE LEE BURNS.
April 20, 1937,

L. L. (Levi Lincoln) McManaman was born in Butlerville, Ind. December 6, 1865, of Scotch Parents. After teaching school for three years near there he decided to come west to Mound City, Kansas, where his mother's father had a store and, while working with him, heard of the wonderful opportunity in the new country being settled in Indian Territory, so one Sunday with another young man, Frank Watson, he came to Baxter Springs by train and drove to Miami and looked the new town over and decided to open a store there.

He says pardner had most of the money. So in the fall of 1891 we opened a general store handling dry-goods and groceries etc. I soon bought out my pardner and continued to operate the store three years, sleeping at first in the store. The store, a small frame building, was located on the east side of the street in the One-hundred Block on what is now Main Street. Among the names of articles sold, I remember that "cotton checks" was shirting and "factory" was brown muslin.

MARRIAGE AND INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH THE MIAMIS.

On Thanksgiving, November 24, 1892, I married Hannah Richardville, oldest daughter of Chief Richardville of the Miamis and served as clerk under him for the Miamis for six years.