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Tribe - Creek
Ranch - The Turkey Track
Turkey Track Trail
Fire Guards

Reuben Partridge
Field Worker
May 14, 1937.

Interview with Robert Atkins
3904 S. 32nd W. Ave., Tulsa, Oklahoma.
Born Eufaula, I. T.

THE TURKEY TRACK TRAIL

Robert Atkins is a Muskogee, or Creek, Indian, sixty-five years old, who was born at Eufaula, I. T. His family later moved to Muskogee, I. T., and when Robert was about sixteen years old he came to stay with his sister, Mrs. Clinton. Charlie, who lived, in 1888, on the east side of town (Red Fork). Mr. Clinton was a cattleman, and in 1891 Robert went to work for the Turkey Track ranch where he was employed for two years.

The manager of the ranch was V. B. Payne, and Tom Hobbs was the range boss. The land was leased from the Sac and Fox tribe through the Sac and Fox Agency. The pasture land was eighteen miles wide and twenty-five miles long, and was divided into four pastures by four crossed wire fences: the first pasture for steers alone; the second for cows; the third for beef cattle; and the fourth for "through" cattle, or those cattle which were shipped in each year from Texas.

Texas Longhorns were shipped from different points in Texas early in the spring of each year, to Red Fork, Indian Territory, and unloaded at the small stockyards on the

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Frisco R. R., about one mile southwest from Red Fork, and driven west over an old Indian trail, or road, to the Turkey Track ranch in the Sac. and Fox country. These cattle, coming from Texas in the cattle cars, were weak and hungry and had to be driven slowly, so that it took two or three days sometimes to make the trip of forty-five miles from the Frisco R. R. to pasture No.4 on the ranch. When the cattle had been fattened, they were driven back over the trail, and shipped on the Frisco R. R. to markets in St. Louis, Mo., and Chicago, Illinois. The cook and chuck wagons went along on every trip with the cattle.

The old road, or trail, which later became known as the Turkey Track trail, was made and used by Indian hunters on their way west to hunt buffalo, long before the Turkey Track ranch was started, or even thought of, but after the ranch was located and cattle were driven over the trail, the Indians themselves and neighboring ranchers gave it the name of the Turkey Track trail. The Turkey Track ranch got its name from the brand with which they branded their cattle which looked like the track of a turkey foot. This ranch held 20,000 head of cattle.

The Turkey Track trail goes west out of Red Fork, passing Lincoln Postak's old home, and on to Timmie Fife's place on Rock Creek; then passing the Jane Wolfe place on Big Salt Creek, it goes on to the Turkey Track ranch. This trail runs on the divide between Pole Cat Creek and the Cimarron River. Headquarters of the Turkey Track Ranch were on Eucsee Creek, near what is now Cushing, Oklahoma. The round-up grounds were on the exact spot where the city of Cushing now stands.

In this pasture, the Company stationed fire-guards about a mile apart, to keep fires from burning the grass. This ranch had a hundred and fifty saddle horses and employed thirty men all the time. In the summer time, when cattle were shipped to market, from nine to fifteen more men were hired.

The best cutting horse on the ranch was named "Yellow Cat", on account of his golden color and his flaxen mane and tail. The ranch was not owned by one man, but by the Saginaw Cattle Company of Michigan.