

JOHNSON, SAMANTHA

INTERVIEW

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Interview with Mrs. Samantha Johnson
13th & Delaware, McAlester, Okla.

Field Worker - Charline M. Culbertson
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
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I was born in Newton County, Arkansas, in the
year of 1865.

My parents were W. J. and Martha Bristow. Mother
was buried in Johnson County, Arkansas, while Father
was buried at Tahlequah.

I came to the Indian Territory in 1890, and located
at San Bois, Choctaw Nation, on Green McCurtain's place.
Mr. McCurtain was the last chief of the Choctaw Nation.

My husband and I came in a covered wagon direct
from Arkansas to the Territory. Along with us
was a brother, Andy Johnson, who drove an ox team and
wagon. I have nothing today that we brought with us
on this trip.

We had planned to stop in the Territory and were
not on our way to Texas, as were so many other families
who drifted in here.

Our first home at San Bois was a three-room box
house, as were most of the houses in this vicinity.

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There were only five or six white families living in this little village; most of the inhabitants were half or full-blood Choctaws. We had no personal friends among them, but made friends with them all. The full-blood Choctaw would like you if you were good to him.

There was only one general store and one drug store in San Bois. The general merchandise store was operated by a Mr. Rogers and Dr. Smith had the drug store. Court was held in a frame building just back of our home place.

My husband farmed mostly corn in connection with hauling groceries for the store from Fort Smith.

We always had plenty to eat. One could raise most anything; as the grass was high we had plenty of hay for the stock. One could kill plenty of deer, wild turkeys and hogs. Our chief food was meat and corn bread. We would have biscuits for Sunday breakfast.

There was a little box school-house where the Indian and white children both attended. The school

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teacher was Professor Samples. He taught from the blue-back speller, reading and writing. The children sat on slab seats and had a box desk. Church was held in the school building, also. Reverend Murphy was our minister at this time.

Their ball games were the only times I have seen the Indians being very rough. The women would bet their beads or anything else they might have to bet. They would run up to the players and hit them with sticks or clubs. I saw the game the time Simus Lucas and Mose Wooderd were killed.

I recall a few United States Marshals, George Nobles, Tony McClure and Oscar Tucker, who has been at our place many times.