

McLEMORE, THOMAS

INTERVIEW

#12094

122^v

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

123

McLEMORE, THOMAS....

INTERVIEW.

12094.

Field Worker's name Hummingbird & Bigby.

This report made on (date) November 10, 1937. 1937

1. Name Thomas McLamore

2. Post Office Address Stilwell, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 10 Year 1874.

5. Place of birth Flint District Cherokee Nation.

6. Name of Father French McLamore Place of birth Cherokee Nation.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Julia Scott Place of birth Cherokee Nation.

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 5.

Hummingbird & Bigby,
Interviewers.
November 10, 1937.

An Interview With Thomas McLemore
Of Stilwell, Oklahoma.

Thomas McLemore, a Full Blood Cherokee was born in Flint District Cherokee Nation, October 10th, 1874. He was the son of French McLemore and Julia Scott both Full Bloods and Cherokees.

The McLemores were natives of the Cherokee Nation but their forefathers came from Georgia as emigrants.

The family consisted of ten children namely: George, Sam, Chester, Thomas, Robert, John, Mary, Sarah, Lula and Lizzie.

EARLY LIFE.

Most of Thomas' early life was spent near the present village of Lyons. His father claimed a small tract of land in this community. The farm consisted of about twenty acres at that time.

The principal crops raised in this part of the Cherokee Nation were corn and cotton. Corn was the main crop but cotton was also raised to some extent. The nearest cotton market being so far away was one reason the Cherokees did not raise much cotton.

McLEMORE, THOMAS.

INTERVIEW.

12094.

-2-

Most of the Cherokees at that time used ox teams. There were only a few teams of horses to be found. The farms were all small in acreage; they averaged about ten acres. If a man operated a twenty acre farm he was considered a large farmer.

CHURCH

There were no churches at that time in this part of the Flint District. Services were sometimes held by Johnson Spade, an early day preacher at Round Spring school house.

This Round Spring School was located about three miles south west of the present site of Lyons. It was the oldest school in the Cherokee Nation, that is, in this part of the Nation. When the school was in progress the services were held at the homes of different people.

SCHOOL.

Thomas McLemore went to school at this country school which was poorly furnished and without books at that time. He managed to complete the fifth grade and his early day teacher was Mont Adair.

-3-

TRADING AND MILLING POSTS.

Evansville, Arkansas, was the trading post of the McLemore family. This town was about twenty miles away. This was their milling post also. Later a store was established at Bunch, but that was after the railroads came through this part of the country in 1894.

Baxter Choate was the first merchant at Bunch. The town was named after the great Cherokee statesman, Rabbit Bunch, who lived two miles south of this place.

SECRET SOCIETIES.

There were no secret societies in his community that Mr. McLemore knows anything about. The Kee-Too-Wah was the only society that he knows anything about, but at that time it was no more a secret society. He has been told that this was a secret society at the beginning. The Night Hawks was also a secret society at the beginning but it is no more. There are several Cherokees now living who belong to these societies now.

POLITICS.

The McLemores were great politicians during the Territorial days, although they were not often elected to

office. But the McLemore family elected men whom they wanted elected and who would give the McLemores jobs in the Cherokee Nation.

The McLemores all belonged to the Downing Party. The other party was the National Party. The two parties usually had hot contests especially when they elected a chief. Thomas McLemore voted when he was eighteen years old. The voting precinct was at Flint Court House. He does not know who the officials were at this election.

RAILROADS.

There was a great question among the Cherokees when it was first rumored that they were to allow the railroads to cross the Cherokee Nation. But the railroads were voted in by the Cherokee Legislature. The Full Blood element was against the railroad coming through but permission was granted without their approval.

ALLOTMENT.

This was another great question among the Cherokees and like the coming of the railroads they were allowed to vote on this second question but the "nays" were defeated.

The McLemores were in favor of the allotment. They were an industrious class of Cherokee people and wanted their part of the land so that they could improve it. The other way, that is, owning land in common they had no chance to improve their claims.

A person could not afford to improve his land for it did not belong to him. If allotted, he knew it was his property. For that reason the McLemores were for the allotment.