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BRIGGS, T. H.

INTERVIEW

#12495

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field worker's name Joe SouthernThis report made on (date) December 28, 1937Atoka, Atoka County, Oklahoma.

1. This legend was
secured from (name) T. H. Briggs

Address Atoka, Oklahoma.This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story Pioneer Doctor among
the Choctaw Indians.

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank
sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets
attached 4

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Joe Southern,
Investigator.
December 22, 1937.

Interview with T. H. Briggs.
Atoka, Oklahoma.

Dr. T. H. Briggs, aged 62 years, has lived at Atoka since 1903. He relates that his experience with the Mississippi Choctaws was very pleasant as he found them to be the most honorable and trustworthy men with whom he has ever had dealings. If one of them promised to bring in money or trade of any kind he was just as sure they would do it as if he had the money or goods in his hand. His remembrance of the later generations has not been so pleasant as they were not so reliable.

He says he asked an Indian Judge once why this was and that the Judge claimed that the Indians were naturally an honest people, but since the younger generations had associated with the white people so long they had gotten to be about as unreliable as the whites.

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In his treatment of the Indians in a medical way he says they were a very sensitive people, even a harsh word would cause them to dislike a doctor. If they were hurt by a doctor more than they thought necessary they would not have that doctor any more. He found they would recover from an injury better than the whites, but in cases of sickness they did not have the resistance the average white people has.

In tuberculosis the doctor claims they did not have any resistance at all in proportion to the white people, for the reason if they had a close built house they would close out all the air and spit most any place. This, of course, applies to the full bloods mostly. The doctor says they were very impatient people as if they were not cured in a few days of most any ailment, they would become discouraged and go for the Indian medicine man.

The faith they had in the white doctor was the best thing in helping them to get well, but if they

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used him because some of their friends asked them to. They were shaky in getting their confidence established in him, but if they once did they were his friend to the end.

A great deal has been said about the quickness and easiness of childbirth in Indian women; the doctor says some of them are that way, but the younger set do not get along so well; again getting bad habits from the whites.

He relates one experience of his which proves the short time and easiness of childbirth in the older full blood Choctaw women. He was in his office next to the Indian Agent's office. He saw a full blood woman leave the office and in three minutes her husband came running into his office for him to hurry downstairs and getting at the foot of the stairs on the sidewalk he found this full blood woman with a baby which had dropped to the walk while she was standing up.

The doctor thinks if the full bloods had been left to their native life they would be more healthful as

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housing has not been good for them in particular in such diseases as consumption and pneumonia.

He says he found they had many herbs they used in treating the sick that were beneficial and now used by the medical profession in general.