

INDEX CARDS

Miller, Elizabeth  
Removal--Cherokee  
Allotment--Cherokee  
Game--Cherokee Nation  
Churches--Cherokee Nation

RICHARD C. MANN  
by  
O. C. Davidson

2-11-37 268

I was born Jan. 20, 1872 in the Goin Snake District of the Cherokee Nation, at Oaks, one of the oldest towns in the Cherokee Nation. I am a full blood Cherokee Indian my mother Elizabeth Miller came from Georgia in the Trail of Tears in 1832. When the Indians were driven out of Georgia at the point of bayonet and brought here like live-stock.

They came here by boats landed at the mouth of the Verdigris River. A rock with the date of their landing carved on it still marks the spot of their landing.

Upon their arrival here the Creek and Cherokee tribes separated. The Creeks going west of grand river and the Cherokees settling east of the Grand River.

Upon coming here the Cherokees were permitted to take claims to the land they wanted, anywhere east of Grand River. The stipulations of the treaty were that this land was to be theirs as long as grass grew and the waters run. But later, the white mans greed for this beautiful and valuable country became so strong that, they went to work and legislated laws in Washington where by this country might be surveyed and divided up allowing each Indian just so much land as a homestead and certain allotment of surplus other than their homesteads.

The fullblood Indians never did agree to this allotment system but were forced to accept it. When these allotments were made the stipulations of the treaty were that the home steads were non-taxable for life and that the surplus was non-taxable for 21 years. By that agreement the youngest child accepting an allotment would be of age before he was forced to pay taxes on his land. But in less than five

years Congress had passed another law imposing a heavy tax upon <sup>269</sup> all indian lands both homesteads, and surplus.

The majority of the Indians having been satisfied to levee the fee and wild life to which they had always been accustomed relying mostly upon nature to provide their needs. Wild game was abundant for meat, wild vegetables and herbs grew everywhere in abundance, nuts of all kinds in the woods, plenty of fish in the streams. They had little need for the money that the white man so craved. I have seen wild geese in such droves that they would hide the sun as they flew over just like a cloud and when they would light in the timber they would bend the trees several inches through to the ground. The deer you could see in droves like sheep. Wild turkey was plentiful. The Indian preserved the wild game by just killing what he needed for food but the white man killed for profit, would ship it away to the cities and sell it. They used to pay men so much per hundred for killing wild pigeon and ship them to the cities. When this tax was imposed upon the Indian land many indians were forced to abandon their homesteads because they had no money to pay the tax.

The greater part of the fullblood Cherokee Indians belong to the baptist church. There were two organizations that came here with the Cherokees from Georgia. They were the Baptist and the Moravians. There were only two Moravian Missions in the Cherokee Nation one at Tahlequah and the other at Oaks. I went to school received my education at the old Moravian Mission at Oaks. We had the old Mission bell there that the Cherokees brought from Georgia, but after the allotments the Moravian Mission was abandoned and the old bell was stolen. Later the Luthreans organized a mission there in the old Moravian site.

The Indian children were never taught the Indian language or customs in the territory they were all taught the white peoples language and customs. In the passing of one generation the language of the Indian has almost become extinct.