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BUCK, NANCY A.

INTERVIEW

6254

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INDEX CARDS

Choctaw Nation
Living Conditions
Whitefield
Choctaw Customs

Second interview with Mrs. Nancy A. Buck
Kiowa City
Field Worker, Charline M. Culbertson
June 15, 1937

As I have no Indian blood my first recollection of the Indians was when I was on my way to Texas with my parents and we came through the territory. We had been living in Missouri. My father was looking for land. I was six years of age at this time. We then moved from Texas to Arkansas and in 1893 moved to Indian Territory, four miles from Hoyt on the Canadian River bank.

Our house was an old Indian log house. It was small with a porch on each side and had a dirt floor with a chimney on one side. My father took red oak boards and made a kitchen. My father dug a well at this place which was in a sand bed. I remember after he dug down twelve or fifteen feet he ran onto an ant bed which was very peculiar. After the well was dug he brought up four long poles and as the well was square these poles were let down one at each corner. Then Father made a square box to fit down in the bottom

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of the well. This was very hard to get down into the well as it had to fit closely. The water in this well came from the river and was very clear.

Our fuel was wood. The only furniture we had were two old wooden beds, a stove and a few chairs which my father had made.

Two years later we moved to Whitefield. We kept moving up the bank of the river. We had to pay a five dollar permit each year besides our rent to live in the territory. This money was all paid to our landlord.

The Indians always lived at the back of their little Tom Fuller patches. The Indians would not live in dugouts because they were superstitious and afraid of these dugouts for some reason which I do not know. Most of the Indians were buried under the floors of the log houses or out in the yards. They would only be rolled in blankets with all their possessions buried with them.

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During the first part of the Civil War, the wild tribes would make raids on the white people. The white mothers on one occasion hid their children under big iron pots and the children cried and hit against the pots and made such noises that it scared the Indians away and they never returned to this place.

The wild Ute Tribe gave birth to their children alone. If it was bad weather the woman would run every one away from the home and if it was good weather she would go out to the corner of the corn field and bring the child back. The child was carried on her back rolled in a blanket.

It was quite customary to see an Indian man with two wives.

The Indian women would go out and get sacks of herbs for making medicine. One weed they would get was called the fever weed and another the squaw weed. A snake-skin which had been shed was put into warm vinegar and used on risings.

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Crops were planted much earlier during the year of 1890 and thereabouts than they are today. We would always have our corn planted by the first of March. Our principal implements were the double shovel, the Georgia stock, the bull tongue plow and the twisting plow. We would always drop our corn as we did not have a planter. On one occasion I planted corn till the snow covered the furrows so that I couldn't see to plant any longer. We would always roll our cotton seed the day before we planted. The cotton seed was put on a smooth place on a sack and wood ashes were sprinkled over it, then several buckets of water were thrown over it then it was rolled and allowed to set until the next day when it was ready to plant. Insects never touched cotton seed which was treated in this way.

In the early '80's the Ute Indian man would give a blanket for the girl he wanted to marry. This gift of a blanket would hold him and the girl together in marriage and it was not necessary to go through a ceremony.