

INDEX CARDS

Journey to Oklahoma
Pioneer Life--Oklahoma Territory
Kickapoo
Food--Kickapoo
Humor--Kickapoo
Collections

p. 2

They drove ten thousand head of cattle, in one herd, overland to Dodge City from Texas. Where the cattle tramped left a road a half a mile wide clear of all vegetation. Before the Santa Fe road was built, the cattle men had to drive their cattle all the way to Kansas City, their only means of reaching market. Dodge City was a wild town in those days.

Where the bridge now crosses the river south of Dodge City was known as Dead Men's Pass. This was caused by so many shooting scrapes and killings at this crossing. They have in Dodge City also what is known as Boot Hill cemetery, known for graves of those who died fighting in their boots.

Our parents learned of the Oklahoma Country opening soon, and also learned of rain in Arkansas in the spring of 1889. Since it was so dry at Dodge City at that time, we left for Arkansas.

When we first left Indiana our parents brought their cow trailing behind the wagon and also a few chickens and their dog. We boys walked all the way tramping behind the covered wagons, barefooted, through hills and rocks of Arkansas, and plains of Kansas, with our feet sore and toe nails knocked off, not knowing what shoes were at that time.

The duties of us boys, on our way through Arkansas and Kansas and back to Oklahoma, was to pick up sticks of wood and kindling along the way and throw into the wagon for fire wood, when we stopped to camp. In the spring of 1889 we traveled through Southwest City, Arkansas, Roger, Fayetteville, and stopped 12 miles from Conway Springs, Arkansas, where we all picked cotton for a living.

We then came into Oklahoma in the opening when our fathers took up homesteads. We crossed the line at Fort Smith, Arkansas and forded the river where it empties into the Canadian.

All we had to eat on our way from Arkansas to Oklahoma was parched corn. We went through Shawnee town, a little place south of Shawnee, as there was no Shawnee then. This was the only town that we saw from the time we left the Arkansas line. We continued on, finally arrived and camped at Choctaw, Oklahoma. Our fathers left us their at our camp, the next morning after arriving, and rode horses into Oklahoma City. They brought home some flour as we began to get pretty hungry; Oklahoma City was the only place we could get supplies.

Our fathers took up homestead in Capitol Hill and we boys went to school together, and had a swimming home down on the farm. All the boys in the country would come down there on Sunday in the summer, to go swimming. We did not know what a bathing suit was in those days. One day when we were going down to the old swimming hole, we found three girls in swimming with their dresses on, and were we mad, as we thought that the pool was only for boys. We could not go swimming until they left. But it took us some time before we could run them away from the pool, so we could undress and go in swimming.

I later went to school at Edmond, Oklahoma where I took my pre-medical work then studied medicine at St. Louis, where I graduated. Began practicing medicine at Choctaw, Oklahoma. Dr. Townsend took his pre-medical work at the Oklahoma University but we both graduated at St. Louis, at the same time, he began to practice at Choctaw, Oklahoma.

About six months after the opening there was a little disturbance among the settlers around the City, everybody was excited as information was out that the Indians were on the war path and heading for the City. It was discovered that a couple got married and they were only having a charivaria out there.

p. 5

I used to attend the Indian pow wows when I was a boy, they were held out north of Shawnee then. This was the Kick-a-poo tribe, so one evening when I was there, they had a dog up over the fire roasting hair and all. They had a long pole run through the dog as we would roast a ham over the fire. I was fifteen, there was a school man from Boston there who was well educated, who was talking to the interpreter and was trying to learn something about the Indians, and was using the word "significance," repeatedly. Wanting to know the significance of this, that and various things, concerning modes and custom of the Indians. Wanted to know of the interpreter why Indians did not freeze, dressed so lightly, as it was pretty cold at the time. The Chief was standing near as the questions were being asked the interpreter, he reached over to the Boston school teacher, pinched his cheek and replied, "He is face all over."

I was in the Army and down Panama. I learned this: Among all tribes of Indians that they do not like mixtures of blood among their people. While at Panama there was an Indian girl of San Blas Indian tribe, who went to Panama City and gave birth to a colored baby and upon her return home she and the baby were both killed by her tribe.

Indians are strong in clinging to their customs and ceremonies. The reason that more Indians have been converted into the Catholic than into the Protestant faith, is that Catholic priests have never tried to take their own ceremonies away from them. Indians attend Catholic church today, but they usually have their own ceremonies afterward. While Protestants have more or less ridiculed them for their ceremonies. This is the reason that nearly all of the Indians in the United States, Mexico, and Central and South America are Catholic.

I have watched them hold their ceremonies, and kept guards around outside so whites would not get too close; later after the ceremonies the Indians would eat roast dog intestines. There was dancing. You would find Indian boys scuffling together, as you would find around our revival meetings.

In their dances they would be in little groups similar to square dance of the white man, only the Indians would not hold hands, as white men do. They danced while three or four of the older fellows chanted.

I later practiced medicine at Atoka County, Oklahoma and I had a good many Indian patients. The fullblood Indians always worried about the younger generation, as they absorbed white customs and wanted them to stay with the customs of the tribe.

This incident happened in 1913. There was an old Indian that I sat up with when he died at the age of eighty. I was well acquainted with him. He told me of an Indian friend who married a squaw, left her at their teepee, was away one day. Two white trappers came by the tent and attacked the Indian's wife. The husband searched for the white men for a long time, finally found them and killed both. The aged Indian told of this incident, said it happened when he was a boy of 20, which was around 1853.

I have been among the Navajo Indians at Gallup, New Mexico, on my vacations. They have what you call ceremonial blankets. The history of the tribe is woven into the blanket. Their ceremony is one of symbols.

I have lived here since moving from Atoka County. But in spite of hardships we have had never had a better time in our lives, than in boyhood days in Oklahoma.

I have pictures of first swimming hole in Oklahoma County, the first Grist Water Mill in Oklahoma County with picture of Father and Mother, with people who came to the mill to grind their grain. This picture includes a negro woman, with a sack of feed to be ground.

Part of this mill is standing there today.
