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INDEX CARDS

Courts--Cherokee  
Fishing--Cherokee  
Burial customs--Cherokee  
Superstitions--Cherokee  
Medicine men--Cherokee  
Cemeteries--Cherokee

Field Worker: George Littlejohn  
May 12, 1937.

Interview with Dave W. Benge  
Akin, Okla. (on route  
Near Nicut, Okla.

Born January 23, 1870,  
Near Akins, nine miles  
northeast of Sallisaw, Okla.

Parents Bill Benge, father,  
Born, nine miles northeast  
of Sallisaw, Okla., 1850.  
Lizzie Roase Benge, mother.  
Born, 4 miles northeast of  
Sallisaw, Okla., 1849.

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I was born near Akins, Oklahoma, nine miles  
northeast of Sallisaw, January 23, 1870. I am 67  
years old now. I am of Cherokee descent.

Father, Bill Benge, was born on the creek  
called Akin Bayou at what was known then as old Indian  
Court house, was located about nine miles northeast of  
Sallisaw, Oklahoma. He was born in 1850 and died  
January 14, 1880, at the same place he was born.

Mother, Lizzie Roase Benge, was born on little  
Sallisaw Creek known as old Roase Place, four miles  
northeast of Sallisaw, March 20, 1849 and died in  
1931 on Brie Creek Place known as the old Holt Place.  
They both were of Cherokee descent.

Hunting: They had what they called flint guns. The hammer of the gun was made of flint. In action the hammer would come in contact with the plunger, which was made of flint too. This caused a spark, which set off the powder.

Fishing: They would build platforms in the middle of the creek made with small trees and tied with tree barks. This form was built mostly on the shallows of the creek where the water moved the fastest. In case of overflow they would catch plenty of fish. Lots of times they would get up above the form and wade and make lots of noise. This would run the fish right down into the trap.

Cooking was done by roasting in the fire place, also baking. Potatoes were baked by covering them in the ashes.

Folklore: Bringing the hoe or umbrella in the house, singing before breakfast, laughing too much at one time; all these were bad luck. Sleeping late every morning and letting the sun catch one in the bed was a sign one wouldn't live long. Indians would always get up before day light and go to the creek and wash their faces right in the swift part of the creek. This was healthful

and they lived longer. Always beat the birds up every morning. A fox yelling or barking near a home was bad luck. Some one of that family would pass away. Also, crows cawing in the night was some sign. In the burial ground it was bad luck to dig a grave one day and not use it that day. If something happened that they didn't use the grave that had been dug, they would go and build a fire in it or kill a chicken and throw it down in the grave. If this was not done, it was bad luck.

Laws: The Indian court house was located on Little Skin Bayou Creek, 9 miles northeast of Gallisaw. There is where the Indians held their courts. Men who committed a small crime such as stealing horses or cows, getting drunk and making disturbances, etc., would be whipped; the law for killing was hanging. They whipped by standing the criminal by a black gum tree that was standing there at the court house. Of course, they hanged them there on the same tree. The old tree is still standing there by the old court house place.

Doctors: They did their own doctoring. For anyone hurting in the side or stomach or back, they would get a piece of tobacco and throw it in the fire. When the tobacco

began to burn or smoke they would hold their hands down in the smoke, and also warm the hand while holding it there. Then they would turn to the sick/<sup>person</sup> and hold his hand about an inch from the person, and also sometimes say something nearly like a prayer but unknown.

Headache: They would take a glass of water, and take a little in the mouth and spurt it on the aching head, and also would say something like a prayer or something in the name of the Almighty.

If a horse or cow got sick they would get a Bible and get right down by the animal and read and every once in a while hit the animal with the Bible. Then read some more.

Graves or Burial grounds: All the Indians had a family grave yard where they lived. If any one died he would be buried near the home. Nearly every old place has old grave yards near by. For instance, this Dave Benges's father and grand-father were buried there at old Indian court house. No marks, but the graves are there.