

FOLSOM, ANNA E.

INTERVIEW.

13156.

Charline M. Culbertson,
Investigator.
March 9, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. Anna E. Folsom,
McAlester, Oklahoma.
Born 1859.
Father-William Mackey.
Mother-Mary Mackey.

I was born at Talihina, Indian Territory, in the year 1859, three miles east of the Indian Council House where the Choctaw Laws were made. This place was not called Talihina at this time but was known as Kiamichi Valley; however, it is the same ground where Talihina is today.

My parents were William and Mary Mackey. Mother is buried in Missouri while Father is buried at Webbers Falls, He was not in the Civil War.

We lived in the Kiamichi Valley sixteen years. The house where I was born was hewed pine log house, with a stone chimney and good flooring and windows.

Father was a hunter, killing wolves, coyotes, deer and wild turkeys. We had a easy life in those days as we did very little work. Father got a bounty on wolves and coyotes, I think he received \$5.00 a head for coyotes and wolves. There were also lions in these mountains.

FOLSOM, ANNA E.

INTERVIEW.

13156.

- 2 -

Father didn't farm any, only raised things we could eat such as corn, beans and cabbage. He went to Fort Smith, Arkansas, to do his trading for such things as sugar and flour and ammunition. Often times the neighboring men would go together in hack with wagons following so as to bring back the supplies. The wives and children didn't go on these trips which would take about ten days or two weeks.

I attended the Missionary Baptist school at Atoka. Mixed breeds were not always allowed to attend the schools. A Mr. Morrow was Superintendent of this Baptist school. The teachers were Mr. Gatewood and Annie Horn. We had no school house at Talihina. The school house was located east of Atoka and was a little log cabin with puncheon floors and seats. Our books were the McGuffey Reader, Blue Back Speller and Rays Arithmetic. Our education was limited. I only attended here two years when I was near the age of twelve or fourteen. As my parents did not live there I stayed in the home of an aunt, Mrs. Liza Ferbis.

The only store I recall in Atoka at this date was the Tom Harris Commissary store. Church was held in the Choctaw

FOLSOM, ANNA E.

INTERVIEW.

13156.

- 3 -

Council House and we had a Missionary Baptist preacher who came once a month. His name was Reverend Walter Fain. The Council House was a hewed oak log house. It had three rooms at first and in later years more rooms were added to it. Our furniture was home-made. Father had three or four saddle ponies but no other stock, as he spent most his time hunting.

I recall one ferry across the Kiamichi River, which was a mile from our place at Talihina. It was called the Squirrel-field Ferry; this name had been given to it by the Indians. It was operated by a Mr. Fields. We also crossed the river in canoes and flat boats operated by white men.

Our principal Indian foods were called Tonsy, Tom Fuller and Pashofa. Tonsy is a mixed dish of beans, corn, tomatoes and potatoes. We always raised good gardens. Most all the farming done was in what we called Tom Fuller patches. Planting was all done in hills. The beans were planted in small circles with willow sticks for them to run on. In these days we knew nothing of coffee.

Our big fish fries we had were down on the Kiamichi River. The only thing we ate with our fish was corn bread. The Choc-

FOLSOM, ANNA E.

INTERVIEW.

13156.

- 4 -

taw Indians would catch these fish by putting shoe string weed in sacks, and getting into canoes they would drag this sack along the banks of the river. This would make the fish drunk and then they came to the top of the water; it was easy to catch them by hand and in this way the small fish were not destroyed. The Indians fried the fish in big wash pots and used a forked hickory stick to turn the fish with.

Some of the barks they used in making dyes were sumack which made yellow, maple made purple, post oak made brown, wild turkey roots made pink, ash bark made light red and tea made from ash bark was also used to cure chills.

My grandmother, Mrs. Ora Mackey, had a loom and did all of our weaving. Frank Colbert, a full blood Choctaw Indian, we called our Medicine Man. His home was in Atoka but he traveled about the Territory practicing medicine. He made all his medicine from herbs.

I have attended many of the Choctaw Medicine Dances. These dances were for the sick and were not called Pashofa Dances as has been claimed by some. A Pashofa Dance was a

FOLSOM, A. NA E.

INTERVIEW.

13156.

- 5 -

merry making dance and not for the sick.

The patients at the Medicine Dance would be lying around on the ground on deer skins and other skins, and those who were able would dance around a pot of medicine made from herbs. Each patient would drink a half a cup of this medicine from a gourd cup.

I have also attended the Fire Dance which was similar to the Pashofa dances; however, at the Fire Dance, the Indians would dance around small bonfires instead of dancing around one big pot of Pashofa.