

FOSTER, MATTIE

INTERVIEW.

#12069

307

FOSTER, MATTIE.

INTERVIEW.

12069

Charline M. Culbertson, Investigator
November 3, 1937

An interview with Mrs. Mattie Foster,
West Apache, McAlester, Oklahoma.

I was born in Decatur, Texas, in the year of 1875.

My parents were Dr. and Mrs. E. N. Ramsey. Father was a dentist and also repaired watches. Mother was buried in Atoka, but Father left when I was but a young girl and I never knew what became of him.

We came to the Indian Territory in 1879, traveling in a covered wagon. We did not travel with other groups but came alone. We located at Atoka because a man named J. A. Dillon insisted that Father settle here, because he thought Father might be able to secure a very good business as there were no other dentists nor watch repairmen in Atoka.

Our first home in Atoka still stands a short distance west of the Katy depot. It was a small three-room frame house. We bought the place from Thort Downing, a white man, but I do not know who owns it today.

There were three or four stores in Atoka when we went there. J. A. Dillon had a grocery store; he was the man who persuaded Father to locate in Atoka. A. B.

FOSTER, MATTIE,

INTERVIEW.

12069

2

Cass had a store and Father had his watch repair shop in this store. I do not recall who operated the other two stores. The old Baptist Church was located across from where the post office is today, on a lot where a filling station now is. Father Burrow organized this Church which Indians and whites both attended.

The Indian court house used to be across from the Trammel home; the lot is vacant today. There are a few willow trees there and at that time there was a fine spring on the lot.

I went to school to a teacher named Emma Tell, who had a small class. Mother paid two dollars a month for me to go to this school. B. S. Smiser was also my teacher at one time. We used the Blue-Back Speller.

Our personal friends among the Indians were Mrs. J. A. Dillon, Mrs. Smallwood and Osborn Fisher.

We did all our trading at Atoka.

They also had the Indian Association at Atoka. The members of the Five Tribes gathered under a brush arbor not far from where the high school is located now. I remember very little about the meeting other than seeing

FOSTER, MATTIE.

INTERVIEW.

12069

3

the big pots of pashofa all over the grounds. Some of the Indians were dressed in blankets. There also were five interpreters.

There was a toll bridge across Foggy Creek just north of the city limits of Atoka which was operated by Bish Ward.

I recall one United States Marshal named Jack Ellis.

The game was plentiful and we did not have to search for it.

I have my mother's brooch and the watch which she brought with her when she came to the Territory. Mother also took in sewing and she would knit socks and wristlets, which she sold but I do not recall the prices she got for them.

Indian court was held in Atoka once a month while the white people had to go to Fort Smith, Arkansas, to court.

I remember an Indian boy, I do not recall his name, who beat his grandmother to death because she would not give him fifty cents. The judge sentenced this

FOSTER, MATTIE.

INTERVIEW.

12069

4
Indian boy to die but set him free for thirty days and after the thirty days were up, he returned and before he was shot he rode on top of his coffin in a wagon.

The sheriff put a black spot near his heart and fired one shot and this Indian boy was dead.