

FOLSOM, JOHN NATHANIEL

INTERVIEW

#6270

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Pete W. Cole, Field Worker.
Indian Pioneer History, S-149.
May 25, 1937.

History in brief of
John Nathaniel Folsom,
A Choctaw and an old pioneer.
Caney, Oklahoma.

A personal interview with the
subject. Age 72 years.

I was born near Matoy, September 7, 1865. My father was a Mississippian and his name was Gus Stevers Folsom. His birth-place and age are unknown to me, as I was just a small lad when he died and I do not know the age, dates of birth, or death of my mother. I lived with my aunt until I was of age when I was married to Alice Jones and to this union were born four children. My first wife and I were divorced and I was married to Caroline Bohanan and to this union was born one girl, who is now living.

I attended a neighborhood school near Bennington, for one term. I had to walk about four miles every day during the term and afterward I attended school at an Indian orphan Home in the Chickasaw Nation which was located about thirty miles southwest of Ardmore, near Gainesville, Texas. I stayed here for five years and finished the course before I came home. A short time afterward the school was abolished. After I came home, I went to Jones Academy, an Indian

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Government School for three years. I was taking the Normal Study Course and attended summer schools and after I finished I taught for six years. I taught in a Choctaw neighborhood school and in Indian Churches, among them were Pleasant Hill, Tany Springs, and Tamaha Oshe, fifteen miles southeast of Talihina.

After I was married I settled down and started raising truck patches which I have been following since.

I was elected Sheriff in Blue County in the territorial days and Tandy Folsom was my deputy. In the second race Tandy Folsom was my opponent and defeated me in the race and when he was elected I was his deputy. I remember one time when I was sheriff there were two men of bad reputation who had killed about five persons who were arrested but instead of taking them to the jail, it was too far to the place, and since I had them in my care, I kept them at my house for about three weeks before I turned them over to the county. All this time I had no trouble with them. They were Jolum Johnson and Dickson Lewis, charged with murder. During the trial one "came clean" but the other died before the trial.

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When I was married we lived in a log house of two rooms that I bought from Austin Pickens. Sometime later I built a three room box house. Had plenty of stock when I moved here. The household furniture and cooking utensils consisted of home-made bed, chairs, table, trunk, dining tables, dishes, pots, etc. These were just the ordinary, common belongings of those days.

Unlike the rest of the Indians of my tribe, we have never had sour bread, hominy, or any kind of Indian dish as most families had. Instead, our every day food consisted principally of biscuits, coffee, sugar, meat, and garden vegetables. I enjoy the regular Indian dishes very much and the only time when I saw this kind of good eats was when I attended Indian church meetings. My mother was a Methodist by faith but was raised by Presbyterian foster parents and attended Presbyterian school.

One of my boys, Oscar Folsom, went over seas to take part in the world War. When peace was declared he was discharged and returned home. Later, he was appointed deputy sheriff of Atoka County under Charles Maxwell. Later, he was a guard at the sub-penitentiary near Limestone Gap.