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HISTORICAL SKETCH OF JOHNNIE GIPSON  
in His Own Words--  
Lane, Oklahoma.

FIELD WORKER PETE W. COLE.  
April 21, 1937

I was born in the year 1871 in Jack Fork what is now Pushmataha County. My parents came from Mississippi with the rest of the early immigrants who came to this county. My father's Indian name was Ayokpachi, but at the beginning of the Civil War in 1860, he adopted a name and was named Johnie Gipson, and served in the Civil War. My mother also changed her name "Oklahoma" to Mary and belong to the "Okla-hannali" "Six tribe" or clan, and my father belong to Okla-falaya Tribe or clan.

I still remember the time when there were no whites or negroes in this country. Then we, mostly Choctaws here and I remember some of the old people such as Nakiittahobi, Betepus Achiyobi, Notabbi, Akukaya, Wells Hampton, Edward Shalihta. These are some of the old peoples that I knew who used to live near Shinok Bok "(Sandy Creek) Church. This was near Kalli Laws (May Spring) old Court ground. There used to be a large settlement in this vicinity but all have died and are buried at this place.

There was at one time plenty of wild animals and games

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such as deer, wild turkeys, and mountain lions, as well as squirrels and other small games. The best time to kill deer is in August, September and to about the middle of November, when the deer is fat. He is killed, barbecued or sun dried and put away until ready for the table. It is cooked and seasoned with red pepper which makes a fine dish.

February is the time to kill bear for meat, as this is the time when he is fat. Melted fat from bear can be used for several purposes in cooking. A bear in his den will not run when one approaches, and if one is found he is easily killed. When he finds a bunch of hogs he will pick out the best and the fattest, he will catch him by the neck and shoulder him back to his den for his meal.

There has been times that when two bucks meet together one would challenge the other for a few rounds, they would get into a fight and at times their horns would lock and neither be able to free themselves and would be in this position until some one would find and kill them or they would starve to death. Some of the eats they enjoy is sweet potato vines and usually a buck can be seen or found in the field where there is a sweet potato patch, and will not run away after being shot at.

We have only three different kind of snakes that are poison in this country and these are rattle snake, coon tail rattler and diamond rattler. There are a few different kind that are poison such as water moccasin, ground rattle snakes and others but these three are the most poisonous.

Wolves are another menace to the community. I have seen them come into the yard at night for something to eat, steal chickens, pigs, and other animals that they can kill. When hungry they will attack man.

There use to be plenty of honey also, and one would have to learn the ways of bees before he can find a bee tree. There used to be plenty at one time but now extinct.

When I was a young man, I hunted often in Atoka, and Pushmataha County hills and mountains for several weeks at a time and I learned the ways and where they range at certain time of the year that I knew just where to go to find any game that I care to kill, but since the state laws went into effect about killing wild games at a certain time in the year I have never been out to hunt as this is not the right time of year to hunt ff you want your game to be fat, sweet and delicious.