

GOOD, ROBERT E. LEE.

INTERVIEW

10385

410

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INTERVIEW 10385

Ethel B. Tackitt, Investigator.
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Interview with Robert E. Lee Good
Hobart, Oklahoma.
712 South Main,

I was born in Tennessee, May 27, 1859; son of Edward Good and Delila Allison Good. I do not remember the native state of either of my parents as my early memories were occupied by the struggles of the people of Tennessee in the times following the Civil War to secure a living for themselves and to recover from its havoc. My father did not serve in the Army but I had two brothers who served in the Confederate Army, one of whom died in service.

My parents were very industrious and reared their family to be the same, as well as religious. We were Methodists of the old type. We lived on a farm and my father also did carpenter work. All farming was done with walking-plows and cotton and corn were dropped by hand.

My father made our shoes out of leather which we tanned in a vat at home, all by hand. We made our own

GOOD, ROBERT E. LEE.

INTERVIEW 10385

harness of this leather, also made our own chairs and all other furniture, such as tables, chairs and bedsteads, from hickory wood.

Mother and my sisters spun the thread and wove the cloth and made all our clothing by hand. Boys as well as girls were taught to knit and I have knit many pairs of mittens and suspenders; these were knitted in strips, crossed in the back and stitched by hand, then button holes were made in each end to be fastened to the buttons on our breeches as our jeans trousers were then called. The buttons were cut out of horn or some other such substance.

We had an ash-hopper in the yard where white ashes, from hickory usually, were poured and into this was poured water, the drippings of which were lye with which we made our own soap from the fat of hogs raised at home.

We made our pails, churns and tubs at home of cedar wood, held in what we called a horse made for the purpose and with a drawing-knife we shaved each piece down to a perfect joint, with a bottom made to fit. Then the staves were bound together with wooden hoops; we later used brass hoops. The wooden dasher was made at home and I

GOOD, ROBERT E. LEE.

INTERVIEW. 10385

-3-

was a grown man before I ever saw a stone jar or churn.

We were careful to see that the fire in the fireplace did not go out either winter or summer, for there were no matches. By banking the ashes over them the coals were kept alive but if it should go out we would have to go to a neighbor and borrow a chunk of fire for a start.

A piece of flint rock, a steel and a piece of punk were usually kept with which to start a fire but it was not always easy to strike fire with the flint. Punk was to be found in rotten logs, but if it happened to be damp it took a long time to dry; therefore, it was much easier to hunt a burning log heap or go borrow from a neighbor a half-mile or such a matter away.

Our winter clothing was made from wool grown on our own sheep, sheared, and washed and made ready for spinning by us boys. The spinning and weaving were done on our own spinning wheel and cloth loom.

The cotton seeds were picked out of the cotton by hand as I never saw a cotton gin until after I was a grown man.

GOOD, ROBERT E. LEE.

INTERVIEW. 10385

-4-

My sister, Jennie, married Frank Carnelison and they moved to the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, in the early 1890's where living conditions were very similar to those which I have just described.

On February 23, 1886, I arrived in Marietta, now in Love County, by train; fresh from Tennessee. Marietta then had only wooden buildings scattered along what was called a street which was a wagon road with board sidewalks in front of the stores which, the best I remember, were two dry goods stores, two grocery stores, three stores that sold general merchandise, two livery stables, some blacksmith shops and one cotton gin.

My sister and brother-in-law lived four miles east of Lebanon, now in Marshall County, on an Indian lease. They met me at the train and we went across the country in a wagon over roads that were simply wagon ruts, following the smoothest ground we could find as there was no such thing known as a section line. There were not many white settlers living near them, but the Chickasaw Indians were very peaceable and well-behaved, except

GOOD, ROBERT E LEE.

INTERVIEW

10385

-5-

when someone would go across Red River to Dexter, in Cook County, Texas, and bring back whiskey. Then the Indians, as well as a great number of the white people, would get drunk and as a usual thing somebody would get killed.

Lebanon had at that time two general mercantile stores, a drug store, two blacksmith shops, a small schoolhouse which was also used for a church; all of which were built of native lumber. There were among the people some as good citizens, both Indians and whites, as could be found anywhere, but there were also many bad characters evading the law in the States.

The Keel family, Chickasaws, had much land and property; one of the boys was a bad man when drunk. Charley Burns was the United States deputy marshal and when this Keel boy got drunk and began to shoot things up Marshal Burns did his best to stop him, but could not and, as he was trying to kill some other people, Burns shot him through the arm and thereby disabled him. He said, "I ought to kill you but I will not do it. Maybe this will teach you some sense." Keel contracted blood poisoning in the wound and died.

GOOD, ROBERT E. LEE.

INTERVIEW 10385

-6-

I had witnessed the shooting and went to the funeral which was the first Indian funeral I ever attended. They placed the body in a home-made wooden coffin and with it placed the boy's clothing and all kinds of things which had belonged to him, including his gun. To my amazement they also put in a little poke of coffee for him to use on his way to the Happy Hunting Ground. They then hauled the coffin in a wagon to an old cemetery in the country and after placing the coffin in another home-made wooden box, placed it in a grave and buried it with a ceremony, all in Chickasaw, that I could not understand.

The woods were full of wild deer and turkeys and we did not need ammunition to capture them for food. The first wild game I ate after I came to the Chickasaw Nation was a turkey which I had gotten just like we did in Tennessee. I found where the turkeys roosted and made a trap by placing a stout string in a loop on the top of some small sticks driven in the ground. Inside this loop, I placed a trigger baited with corn on the top. To the trigger was fastened the other end of the string that

GOOD, ROBERT E. LEE.

INTERVIEW.

10385

-7-

had the loop in it and this went up over the tree. The turkey in this case was a fine big gobbler and when he pecked down on the trigger the loop caught him around the neck and jerked him high into the tree where I soon came to get him for my first wild turkey dinner in the Chickasaw Nation. Wild turkeys were also caught in bunches by digging a ditch from near the brush fence, surrounding a corn field to a covered pen several feet inside. In the bottom of the ditch was strewn shelled corn leading in to the covered pen which had a small opening at the bottom. The turkeys would follow the line of corn, picking it up until all were in the pen then they never looked down to find the way out again, but were caught in the trap.

For many years nobody thought of raising turkeys because there were so many wild ones, but later there came turkey peddlers into the country after the wild turkeys were killed out. It was the same with the wild hogs; as long as the country was open and they were used for food of the settlers they were plentiful, but when it was settled up and some people took more than belonged to

GOOD, ROBERT E. LEE.

INTERVIEW

10385.

-8-

them, wild game disappeared. I remained in the Chickasaw Nation and later married. My wife's parents were Isaac and Bettie Evans and her name was Maggie. The Evans family came to the Chickasaw Nation from Tennessee in the early 1880's and settled near Lebanon, also.

I have lived in Oklahoma fifty-two years, this past February, and am now living in Hobart. I find making a living much more difficult than it was under conditions in the early days.