

INDEX CARDS:

Choctaw Nation
Coal Mines
Wild Game
Indian Doctors
Choctaw Food
Skullyville
Gum Creek Church

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Bradley Bolinger

This report made on (date) May 17 1937

1. Name John N. Hall
2. Post Office Address Wilburton, Oklahoma General Delivery.
3. Residence address (or location) 12 miles south west of Wilburton.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 11 Year 1857
5. Place of birth Lawrence County Alabama.

6. Name of Father John Johnson Hall Place of birth Alabama

Other information about father Died and buried - Gainesville, Mo.

7. Name of Mother Mary Ann Smith Hall Place of birth Alabama

Other information about mother Lived to the age of 72, died and is buried in the new Wilburton Cemetery.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. For suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 5.

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN N. HALL.

FIELD WORKER, BRADLEY BOLINGER.

May 17, 1937

EARLY DAY INDIAN ACQUAINTANCE AND EXPERIENCES.

Mr. Hall tells me; my father, John Johnson Hall, was born in Lawrence County, Alabama, and my mother, Mary Ann Smith Hall, was also born in Lawrence County, Alabama.

I was born in Lawrence county, Alabama, myself. My father and mother moved with me from Alabama to Missouri, where my father died, when he was 45, and is buried in the cemetery at Gainesville, Mo.

My mother and I moved from Missouri to the Indian Territory now the Choctaw Nation, when I was 15 years old, along in the fall of 1873.

There were a few coal mines being opened in the Choctaw Nation and as my mother was a widow I went out and secured what employment I could around the mines at \$1.00 per day.

When I came to this country there were lots of wild hogs and cattle. The Indian would just raise enough corn to feed him and his family. They beat up this corn and made what they called Tom Fuller and Pashofa. They also mixed fresh meat or some kind of wild game with this dish they always made. The Indian did not use many dishes. When the

meal was ready, the whole Indian family ate out of one large container. They used for spoons one half of a small cow horn or deer horn which was cut in two and whittled out some, cleaning it out good where the large part served as a container, when they dipped anything to eat, it would be with this horn spoon.

The Choctaw tribe had what they called Indian Doctors. They were very foggy in their belief. The Indian doctor would dig roots of plants and cook them down to a liquid. Anytime an Indian became sick he wanted the Indian doctor to be there. When the Doctor tried all his remedies and the sick Indian did not get better, all the Indians in the settlement were called in and fixed some of the pashofa, letting it sour and they gave the sick Indian the sour juice. While the sick Indian was trying to get some of this sour juice down, all the Indian men would get something like small drums and put on what they called the Pashofa Dance around the sick man's bed. They would do this all night trying to ward off the death of the sick Indian, as this, according to the Indian doctor, was the last chance to save his life and drive the trouble out of his body. If the sick got well, they said the pashofa and the dance cast the trouble out of his body.

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3

When the Indian man or woman lost a husband or wife by death, all the relatives that could be gotten hold of were there and then the burial took place. It was against the Choctaw tribe rule for a woman or man who had lost his wife or her husband by death to marry again right at once. When parties wished to marry again they would call as big a meeting as it was possible to get at the Indian burying ground, and have their dinner or some meal on the ground. They would all gather around the grave of the buried dead and have what they called an Indian Cry meeting. They would carry this moaning along for several hours. After this meeting was over, the widowed husband or wife had full permission from the Choctaw Indian government to re-marry any one they chose.

The Choctaw tribe in those days did not have to go to the white man's court and secure a license to marry. The man and woman went together to the Indian minister and this minister said a ceremony over them and that made them eligible to live together as man and wife.

I have been around the Choctaw tribe for a number of years. It was a rule in this tribe that the woman do all the work. She raised all the corn used for their Tom Fuller, and all other crops that were used for food. All the husband did

4

was do the hunting.

During those days and before I was very old, all the Choctaws in this country gathered at a place called Skullyville, and another place was called Culley Chaha, and one Nashoba. The Choctaws went to these places and there was a U. S. Government man there with silver money to pay these Indians on an average of \$50.00 each. This was done every three months.

The Indians in this country made this trip to old Skullyville every way movable. Some had ox teams, some horseback. It would take an Indian about one week to make the round trip.

When the Choctaw Indian was moved from the south to this country some of the older ones had learned to speak English. But after coming to the territory they stopped using the English language and used only the Choctaw language.

There was an Indian church house built on the banks of Gum Creek, now Latimer county, along about 1880. About once a year, along in the fall of the year, the Indians would gather at this place, with ox teams, horse back and a foot. They all brought food. They would kill whole cattle and hogs and bring them to the grounds dressed and ready for their meals. Deer

and all kinds of wild game were also brought. All the Indians would camp right on the church yard grounds. Spread their food at meal time in several long places so that every one could get to it. They always fed the Indian preachers and the more important church workers first. Then every one would gather and eat. These religious meetings would last about a week. The women did their cooking for the whole bunch there on big log fires on the ground. This church is still standing where it was in the early day.

In this Gum Creek church yard there were a number of Indians buried in the church yard. When they buried an Indian in that early day, they built a small log house over the grave just the size of the grave. They put a roof on it and all the personal possessions such as ornaments, pipes, earrings and finger rings, in fact all ^{of} the personal possessions that ever belonged to the dead Indian were put in ^{the} grave.