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

Field Worker's name Johnson H. Hampton

This report made on (date) May 25, 1937

- 1. Name Emiziah Bohanan,
- 2. Post Office Address Miller, Oklahoma.
- 3. Residence address (or location) _____
- 4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 1st Year 1888
- 5. Place of birth In Eagle County, Choctaw Nation.

6. Name of Father Amos Bohanan Place of birth In Eagle
County, Choctaw Nation.
Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Listie Bohanan. Place of birth In
Eagle County
Choctaw Nation.
Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached None.

Johnson H. Hampton
Field Worker
May 25, 1937.

148

Interview with Emiziah Bohanan
Miller, Oklahoma.
Born July 1, 1882.
Father-Amos Bohanan.
Mother-Listie Bohanan.

I was born in Eagle County, Choctaw Nation, on July 1st, 1882, now McCurtain County, Oklahoma.

My father's name was Amos Bohanan, and my mother's name was Listie Bohanan. I don't know just where they were born, but I think that they were born in Eagle County; there was no village or town there; it was out there in the wilderness, so I say it was in Eagle County, where we lived, and where I was born.

My grandfather's name was Tushkahaya and he came from Mississippi and located in this County. He and my grandmother lived there and they both died there.

I don't know whether my grandfather was in the Civil War or not, and I don't think that my father was in this war; there were a good many Indians joined the army I understand with the southern soldiers, and fought some battles with the southern army; the only thing I can tell is what I heard after I was grown; the older people would sit around and talk about what hard times they had while in service of the army; the most of the Indians did not have anything when they joined the army, and they said

- 2 -

that they had a hard time getting by; they would go without a bite to eat for several days; they did not have sufficient ~~clothes~~ to keep them warm when it turned cold on them; they had ^{to} ride horses and could not take but one quilt with them and they sure suffered from cold; they would build up a big camp fire and sit up by the fire all night, and start riding the next morning without a bite to eat, and maybe ride several days that way, I never did hear them say who their commander was; they might ~~be~~ ^{have} said who it was, if they did I don't remember it; they sure could tell it awful scary to the children. I don't know whether they were telling the truth to us or not.

During the war several families moved to Eagle County; They said that they were a bunch of refugees running from the soldiers. They told that the soldiers would take anything they saw and wanted. They would kill cattle, and they would get horses they saw and wanted. In fact they were just mean and the Indians that lived up north of us (Where the soldiers were mostly) moved from there and located somewhere or they would go out into the mountains and stay there. Some of them built a log house and lived there until the war

- 3 -

was over. We were not bothered with the soldiers for when they joined the army they went north, they would ^{not} come back for a long while; they would come and visit the family and go back.

We lived in a log house with a dirt floor. We could not buy any lumber at that time, but after several years the sawmills came in there and began to cut the pine, then we could get some lumber and floor our log houses. There were no houses built out of lumber then--it was all log houses chinked and daubed with mud. These were warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

During the war they told of having war dances. This war dance was pulled off when some young braves had joined the army and were ready to take off, then they would have this dance for them. Then they had scalp dances. When a scalp of an enemy would be sent back home, or brought home by some Indian soldier they would all get together and have one of those dances; they would build up a big fire and hang the scalp up where they could see it and then they would dance around the fire and the scalp, they would dance all night. After the war the Indians did not have any more

- 4 -

war dances. They quit dancing about that time and have never danced any more.

After I was big enough to remember things, we had a hard time in getting anything to eat such as flour and other food stuff. My father had to go to Arkansas to get flour, sugar and coffee and other groceries. We were not the only ones who got our groceries from Arkansas. The neighbors around us got their groceries from there. They would all get together and several wagons would go, they would be gone for several days, bringing what we needed for a while, then they would go again.

We lived on a farm and raised some corn--all the corn we needed for our bread for we did not feed corn to our ponies for there was plenty of grass they could live on during the winter without being feed corn. We needed the corn for our bread and could not afford to feed our corn to the ponies.

Mother used to make meal out of corn. She would put the corn in a mortar that she had, this mortar being made out of a post oak block square on both ends, and which stood on one end. The other end had a bowl in it, this

- 5 -

bowl was made by burning it with coals of fire, about 6 or 7 inches deep so that it would hold "right smart of corn." She would put the corn in the bowl and be at it until she made meal out of this corn. This was about the only bread we had for we could not get flour when we wanted it so we had to stay with our corn bread; she would make other things out of corn.

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She would go out somewhere and dig up some roots which she called in Choctaw language Lokchok-Ahi, in English it would be called ^dMug-Potatoes. She cooked it by boiling it, and it was just as good as Irish potatoes are now. At that time we had no Irish potatoes, in fact we did not know that there was such a thing as Irish potatoes out where I lived so these ^dMug-Potatoes answered the same purpose. She then would get another root which she called it Kentak, I don't know what it would be called in English, the vine of this root looked like a Bamboo vine; it had stickers on it like a Bamboo briar. This root had a big head and she would peel the outside of this root and slice the inside, put it on the house top and let it dry; then she would beat it

- 6 -

like she would corn. It took some time to do this, it would finally turn into what looked like flour. She called it flour. When it was baked it eat nearly like flour of today. It was good, too.

We had a hard living in those days. We raised some stock but could not sell them for there was no market for them, and every Indian had stock; they would not sell them either. It was not worth anything. We could not get enough to buy a good sack of flour out of them if we sold. It was not like today for the stock brings a good price now but us Indians don't have any to sell.

My mother had a spinning wheel and a weaver. She used to make our clothes, such as shirt, pants, socks and mittens. She made them out of cotton, then she would get something and dye the clothes she made but I don't know what she used. When she would get them dyed, they looked ^{like} store bought clothes. She used to make them and sell them to Indians who wanted to buy them. I don't know what she got for them, but I know that she did not get much for them. No money at all, for the Indians did not have any money at all in those days.

- 7, -

I saw one Indian ball game. It was between Wade County and Gaines County. They did not have but very little fight during the game; they had a pretty good game; there was some fighting done but it did not amount to much; nobody killed, which made it a pretty good game.

I did not attend school but very little, and I am unable to speak, read or write but very little English. However, I can read and write in my own language just about as well as any Indian in my class. I am about the average in my own language. of course there are some Indians that are pretty well educated in English who can't read nor write in their own language so I think that I am about the average.

I am a full-blood Indian, I don't remember what clan I belong to. I think though I am a six clan which consists of full-bloods. I am an Indian Preacher, I am a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and of course preach to the Indians all together, because I don't understand English, and could't preach in English. I am now living about 12 miles west of Antlers, Oklahoma.