

LIVERS, TOM

INTERVIEW

13112

332

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INTERVIEW

13112

L. W. Wilson,
Journalist,
February 21, 1938.

Interview with Mr. Tom Livers,
Route No. 2,
Sallisaw, Oklahoma.

Far up in the most picturesque hills of the eastern part of Oklahoma, lives Tom Livers, a full blood Cherokee Indian.

Mr. Livers has all the instincts and peculiarities of a full blood Indian. He visits and talks with the ~~whites only when they are well known to him.~~ He has deviated from the life and customs of the Cherokees very little and lives now practically as the Cherokees did a half century or more ago. He lives in a little cabin with a fireplace. Wood is plentiful around him but he keeps only a little wood on hand at a time. He will drag, usually, a stump six feet long and put this in the fireplace for a back log.

Most of his meals are prepared in the fireplace. He loves to fish and hunt. He kills all his game with a bow and arrow.

Mr. Livers understands the English language fairly well,

LIVERS, TOM

INTERVIEW

13112

-2-

but speaks it very brokenly as do most Full Bloods with only limited educations. His answers to questions were brief and to the point and he usually started with a grunt and a sigh.

The Interviewer feels it will add color to his interview by writing this story in the same manner as given him by Mr. Livers.

His story is as follows:-

Eh! Tom Livers born long time go. March 27th, 1867. Born Flint District- Cherokee Nation. Be seventy-one in March.

Eh! Father, Mother born Georgia. Old country. Come with Chief Ross. Yeh, John Ross. Father killed before I born, right after white man war. Mother die too. Me six years old. White man make Cherokees leave Georgia. Eh! drive 'em like cows. Come here have nothing. Soldiers give 'em, ax, hoe, corn, saw. Make 'em log house. Plant corn with hoe. Mother and Tom Livers live in hills, no go, no place durin' war. Father come back from war, die, soon Mother die. I go live with Aunt. Grow up, make me log house, hunt, fish, plant corn. Eh! sell hides Fort

LIVERS, TOM

INTERVIEW

13112

-3-

Smith, get clothes, sugar, salt, sometimes drinks.

Yeah! Go school down the "Ookonlongah" School. Teacher Lizzie Taylor. No learn. Shoot through crack, blow gun hit teacher. Me mean kid. I no care for English. I talk Cherokee. Eh! blow gun. Long cane put in arrow kill birds. Shoot teacher no arrow, just stick.

Hgh! dress. Wear long shirt, be man. Women whip me, put clothes on me. I run, hide in woods, women say know nothing. Men dress, red hunt shirts, pants, moccasin. Make skin cap from coon skins. Eh! moccasin from deer skin, sew 'em squirrel skin. Some wear buck skin around legs. Ugh! Bow make 'em Bois de Arc, sometimes hickory. Bow strings make 'em deer sinew - sometimes squirrel skin. Arrow dogwood, sometimes use spike in arrow. Eh! feather on arrow. Use wild turkey feather. Lots wild turkeys. Fasten feathers on arrow with squirrel skin, make 'em shoot straight.

Doctor, no have 'em, Tom Livers sick. Tom Livers get bark, sometimes get roots, make medicine. Tom Livers take 'em, get well.

Eh! game long time go. Turkeys, coons, possums, quail,

LIVERS, TOM

INTERVIEW

13112

-4-

rabbits, bear sometime, lots deer. Game all gone now, sometimes coon, possum, sometime squirrel. Me kill squirrel yesterday with bow. I shoot bow good. Squirrel way high in tree, almost in hole, I pull back, bing go arrow, down come squirrel. Make 'em soup. Save skin make bow string.

Yeah! Tom Livers marry. Wife dead. I no tell name English. She dead now. See woman in door over there, she my baby. No, she no talk English. Girl live salli- saw, she talk English.

Hgh! farm. I no farm. Got fourteen oil wells on land, get money, no have to work. Agency, Muskogee send me money. Land by Ramona. Eh! live in town. Tom Livers no like 'em. Stay in woods, like 'em best. Tom Livers give money to girls n' grand-girls and boys. They got no oil wells. Tom Livers like drinks. Tom Livers eat and drink. Ugh! jail. One time, Fort Smith, Arkansas, Judge Parker, say thirty days. Go Fort Smith long time, go get drunk. Police say Tom Livers drunk, lock Tom Livers in jail.

Charlie Rhodes he United States Marshal. He live

LIVERS, TOM

INTERVIEW

13112

-5-

Sallisaw. I go Fort Smith, get whiskey, come back on train. Tom Livers got three quarts in overcoat. Charlie he search people for drinks. Charlie feel coat, say, "Tom Livers you got whiskey." Tom Livers say "No, that my baby." Next day, Charlie say, "Tom Livers had whiskey, no baby." Charlie say, "You drink 'em, let you go, you no sell 'em."

Ugh! jail in Territory. No jail. whip post. Steal, whip 'em. Too much steal, hang 'em. Yeah! I see 'em whipped. John Weavels steal horse, Sheriff tie 'em to tree, whip hard a hundred times. Ha! Ha! No, Tom Livers never get whipped. Tom Livers no steal. Tom Livers know he get whipped if he did.

Eh! ride bus. Build highway, cars go by all night over there, bing, bing, they go. Tom Livers no sleep lots nights, now sleep no hurt me. I see big bus, one day, Tom Livers ride all day, go Stilwell, Tahlequah, Muskogee, back hurt bad, no like 'em. Tom Livers got bus come back, no ride 'em no more.

Girl, Sallisaw got cars sometimes she come get me, take ride.

LIVERS, TOM

INTERVIEW

13112

-6-

Ugh! allotment yes, get mine Mamona. Tom Livers
never live on 'em. Live on wife's allotment here in hills.
Tom Livers get check one time out mail box. Didn't know
was check, bring home girl say check for oil at Mamona.
Tom Livers glad.