

INDEX CARDS

Atoka;
Wealthy Indians--Choctaw
Leasing--Choctaw Nation
Game--Choctaw Nation
Boggy Depot
Blacksmiths--Choctaw Nation

INTERVIEW WITH MR. W. E. WALLACE
ATOKA, OKLAHOMA.

FIELD WORKER PETE W. COLE.

April 16, 1937

HISTORY IN BRIEF OF W. E. WALLACE 75 YEARS OF AGE.

I was born in the state of Arkansas in the year of 1862, and came to this country in 1896 at the age of about 34. I first stopped at Durant, Indian Territory, a small (and the only trading) place north of Red River at that time. After my arrival in this country, I rented a farm near Yarnaby Post Office and worked the place for a few years and later came to Atoka, Indian Territory. Atoka was only a small place as there were only about four stores and one or two drug stores.

There were five of us in the family. Three children, my wife and myself came in a covered wagon. In those days one could pasture or fence off any size tract of land and claim it as his own, so one John Hodges, a part Indian, had a large pasture containing several hundred acres about five miles west of town. He had a nice home and was considered a wealthy and well-to-do farmer in this part of the country. I rented some land from this man through correspondence and moved to his place yet I had never met this man nor known him before.

At that time he owned a big merchandise store and was so

busy most of the time that he hardly ever made trips to his farm to see how his renters were doing. But he gave us orders that, if at any time we needed anything, he would accept all bills out of his store. He built a large two story dwelling house where he lived in town and today this house can be seen from the highway that runs through Atoka. It is one of the oldest residences in town today.

When we came to this country our chief food was bread, meat and milk. We raised sufficient corn to run us, raised our own hogs for meat, and had cows to milk. There were plenty of wild game such as deer, wild hogs and turkeys. Tho I did not go a hunting as we could buy what we wanted from the Indians. They were selling their kill nearly all of the time.

Atoka, being a small place, had no water system or electric lights. We used to draw water from wells and cistern. This was our only trading town and we did all of our trading here.

I have never had any trouble with the Choctaws and today I consider all of the Indians of my acquaintance friends. I have attended their pow-wows, pishoff dance and attended their religious meetings.

My parents died when I was a young boy and were buried in Arkansas.

I am not a graduate of any school but attended a Common Elementary School. This school was run by people taking subscription to collect enough money to hire a teacher for so many months school..

There were no highways or bridges over rivers like we have today so when we came to Westville Arkansas, on our way to Indian Territory, we arrived at a small Indian town named Going Snake near Canadian River, and the river had risen so that we could not cross. We were obliged to camp behind a high bluff and had to wait until the river went down before we could cross. We came to Limestone Gap but stopped at Boggy on account of high water. We turned west to a small coal mine No. 2 in Coal County, and to Lehigh and from there we traveled south to Boggy Depot, from thence to Caddo as this was the only wagon road through this part of the Country at that time.

When we arrived at a place out in the country, there was only one store and a blacksmith shop. We asked the storekeeper, how far it was to Boggy Depot, we were told that this was the place. We again asked where the depot was, and was informed that the closest depot was Atoka, fourteen miles distant. Of course the joke was on us through ignorance but we did not know

that Boggy Depot was only a small place and was not on any railroad.

Since I have made Atoka my home, I was elected County weigher in 1912 and held that office for four terms. After I was defeated for the fifth term, I traveled for about eight years on account of my health. Came back to Atoka, and was a candidate again for the same office and was elected by large majority and have held that position since.