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Joe Southern,
Research Field Worker,
May 12, 1937.

Interview with McGee Woods
Choctaw Indian
Lane, Oklahoma

McGee Woods was born March 25, 1879, his father, Abner Woods, having been born near Hugo, Oklahoma, and his mother being Selean Carnes. His parents moved to a place five miles southeast of Lane, Oklahoma where McGee was born. His father and mother, both, are dead and are buried at the Pine Grove Cemetery.

McGee went to school at Atoka, Indian Territory, Baptist Indian Academy. This school was established by Reverend J. S. Murrow and was financed by tuition and missionary churches. The Academy was located between Clear and Muddy Boggy Rivers, now Pine Grove, Salem, Buffalo Head, Cole Springs. The buildings were of native logs and covered with boards made of native timber.

The musical instruments of that period were the organ, violin, banjo and drum.

Game and fish were plentiful as were also cattle, hogs, ponies and sheep. Traders and buyers would come through the country with an interpreter each spring and fall, and buy live stock, paying in gold and silver,

(there were no banks). Hogs were sold for \$5.00 each; cattle from \$10.00 to \$20.00 each; ponies from \$10.00 to \$20.00 each; sheep from \$1.00 to \$1.50 each. Wagons cost from \$125.00 to \$150.00; buggies from \$100.00 to \$135.00; hacks from \$135.00 to \$200.00; harness from \$40.00 to \$80.00; cook stoves from \$40.00 to \$150.00; sewing machines from \$150.00 to \$200.00.

Ely Walker Dry Good, St. Louis, Missouri; Shapley Hardware Company, St. Louis, Missouri; Simmons Hardware Company, St. Louis, Missouri; John Deere Flow Company, Moline, Illinois, implements and wagons; Cuddahy Packing Company, Kansas City. These firms would send traveling salesmen into Indian Territory each year in the spring and fall to take orders. Terms were six and twelve months. Local merchants would sell to farmers and stockmen and Choctaw Indians on three to nine months time. The markets for stock and farm products were Atoka, Stringtown and Antlers.

CHURCH CUSTOM

The Indians would go and camp from ten to twenty days at Church house, kill beeves and barbeque meat and cook on the ground. Thus, they worshipped God and had a good time.

Horse racing was a pastime. They would meet at Joe

Homer Prairie, located southeast of Atoka, (near Boggy Bridge on Highway No. 19 now) and they would bet ponies, cattle and hogs. They would meet there also to play stick ball games.

They used bow and arrow to kill fish with-in Clear water. They also used Devil Shoe String, beating it, in boats filled with water until enough for a large haul. This water was dumped at the head of haul, then they went to lower end to spear them - when the fish tried to go down the stream. This plan was used in muddy streams.

Trappers would trap in the Boggy Rivers, Atoka, Allen and Turnbaugh Lakes for Coon, Mink, Beaver and o'possum. The market for fur and snake root was at the Julius Hass market in Atoka. Prices received for Beaver hides was from \$2.00 to \$4.00; Mink from \$1.00 to \$5.00; o'possum from 25¢ to \$1.50.

Elections were held for Choctaw Indians at Atoka; Buffalo Head Church, near-Boggy River 3 miles southwest of Bridge on Highway No. 19; Hobart, located on Campbell Creek, NW SW SW SW Sec. 6, T2S, R13E; Boggy Bend northwest of Stringtown 2½ miles in SE SE SE Sec. 6, T1N, R1E. All these places have been abandoned. The Choctaw's would meet

and elect Governor, Councilmen, District and County officers. Revenue was collected from permits, royalties from coal, asphalt and granite mines and timber; from farmers, merchants, cattlemen, sawmills, hunters and trappers. This revenue was used for government expenses.

Potato post office was located on Potato Creek in 1875 in Sec. 15, T1S, R13E. This has been done away with.

Council grounds were located at Tuskahoma in Choctaw Nation. District Court south and west of Boehler, Oklahoma, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in Choctaw County. County Court at Atoka in Indian Territory. All have been done away with.

I have received one payment of \$1000 from U. S. Government about the year 1900.

In the fall of the year, in November, it was our custom for three or four families to go into timber range and kill hogs and beef and deer meat for winter use. We would salt down hog meat for ten days, then draw out and scald in a solution made of vinegar, brown sugar, black pepper, red pepper and water; hang in a dry place and build fire from Hickory wood and smoke for three days; then take down and pack in box with corn shucks, charcoal, wood ashes. Would keep for one year. Deer and beef meat would use same fluid, add salt, boil for ten minutes. Take meat out and

hang and smoke it until good and dry. Take down and pack in corn shucks and charcoal. This would keep for one year.

We farmed small patches of corn, beans and vegetables. We had a good fruit orchard. Would gather fruit, cut and dry it for winter use.

Clothing was made of Calico, Gingham and woolen goods. Shawls, handkerchiefs, boots and shoes were worn. Also, jewelry such as beads, rings and watches. The head dress of Indian girls was to braid and tie with ribbon or rolled in knots on back of head and held in place with combs made from horn.

Their trading point was Atoka, Indian Territory, and their merchants were the Robb Mercantile Company and G. A. Cobb Mercantile Company (white men). Leon Harkins, Choctaw Indian merchant; J. D. Lankford Drug Store, John M. Hodges Drug Store (white men). John M. Surrell Livery Barn; Alinton Tell, Choctaw Indian Lawyer. Dr. E. N. Wright, Choctaw Indian Doctor; George W. Bates, Hotel Keeper. Reverend J. S. Murrow, P.G.M. and Organizer of Masonic Fraternity (white man). There was also John Frenzell, blacksmith, who had married a Choctaw Indian woman. William H. Harrison, Choctaw Councilman and John Harrison, official interpreter of the courts. All these business have been abandoned and the men have died.
