

INDEX CARDS

Poteau

Game--Choctaw Nation

Fur trade

Sawmills--Choctaw Nation

Immigration--Choctaw Nation

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May 11, 1937.

I was born April 11, 1865 in Vernon, Indiana. My parents were of German decent and died when I was very young. At the age of nine years I came to the Indian Territory with a family by the name of Wilson, the head of the family was James Wilson. We made the trip in a covered wagon and were many weeks on the road as the roads were not improved in those days and the hardships were many. The Wilsons settled near Tanaha, in the Choctaw nation.

I helped Mr. Wilson farm the first year I was in the Territory, and in the fall, after harvest, Mr. Wilson with his family returned to Indiana. I liked this country and the Indians and did not return with the Wilsons, but made my home with a full-blood Choctaw family by the name of Seerat who had a farm and ranch situated at the foot of Sugar Leaf mountain near Poteau, which at that time had only one store, which was owned by a man by the name of Welch. In those days Poteau was a favorite resort for outlaws, such as robbers and bootleggers as it

(2)

SAM YOST

was only a short distance from the Arkansas line.

This country was a hunter and trapper's paradise when I first came to this country as there were plenty of wild game, such as black bear, panther, timber wolves and along the Poteau river were racoon and other small fur bearing animals. Fur buyers out of Ft. Smith would come through the territory and buy up the furs from the trappers. The settlers in the early days could stand in their front yard and kill a deer or turkey most any time they wanted to.

The Frisco railroad was built through that country about 1886 and the town of Poteau began to grow, and the saw mills that were brought in ran day and night cutting native lumber for the railroad and general building in Poteau. The Frisco section house was the first house built there and a Mr. Flener was section foreman and boarded the section men, traveling salesmen and, in fact, it was the only eating place or hotel in Poteau for about a year. After the railroad was built, good farmers from the states began

(3)

SAM YOST

to move in, clear and break up the fields in the rich Poteau valley, which would produce about forty-five bushels of corn or one and a half bales of cotton per acre as an average.

Other towns along the Frisco in the Choctaw Nation then were small and mostly saw mill towns and lumber camps. While the saw mills were running all these places were lively towns with a transient population of from two to five hundred people.