

MICKLE, ED LEE

INTERVIEW

5830

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

Field Worker's name Bradley Bolinger

This report made on (date) Thursday, May 20 1937

1. Name Ed Lee Mickle
2. Post Office Address Wilburton, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 8 Year 1870
5. Place of birth Gaines County in the Territory Days. Now Latimer County
6. Name of Father Billey Mickle Place of birth Choctaw Nation  
 Other information about father ¼ breed Choctaw Indian
7. Name of Mother Lizzie DeHart Mickle Place of birth Cherokee Nation  
 Other information about mother 83 years of age- ¼ Cherokee Indian  
Died October 17, 1925- Buried in the Wilburton Cemetery

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

Bradley Bolinger  
Interviewer,  
Wilburton, Oklahoma  
May 20, 1937.

An Interview with Ed Lee Mickle  
Wilburton, Oklahoma

OLD INDIAN BURYING GROUNDS

I am sixty-six years of age. I was born in what was in the early days Gaines County and at present is named Latimer County.

My father, Billie Mickle, was born in the Choctaw Nation; he died June 2, 1902. He was buried in the new Wilburton Cemetery. My father could speak the Indian language. He was interpreter for all officials who came into this territory for information.

My mother's name was Lizzie DeHart Mickle. She was born in the Cherokee Nation. She died October 17, 1923, at the age of eighty-three and was buried in the Wilburton Cemetery.

There was only one trail or road that came through this country then, it was built by the soldiers from Fort Smith and started from Fort Smith and was opened to the Texas border long about 1877.

The Indians, when they were first moved to this country, did not have a certain amount of land set aside for their dead. When there was a death in an Indian family they dug a grave out

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in the yard and in many cases the dead were just buried under the floor of the cabin.

There is a small Indian burying place about four miles north of Wilburton. There were twelve graves. This burying place is located right on Highway No. 2 that goes north to Quinton. In the early days each of these graves had a little building built over it, with a roof and everything in place. However, at the present time these little buildings have almost rotted away. This graveyard is situated on land that belongs to the Indian Department now. There is a new Government house close to it now situated on the Government Indian Reserve where the Indians are building new homes.

There is another Indian burying place north of Wilburton. There was only one grave which could be identified. It is right in the middle of a field which is now in cultivation. This grave has a large elm at the head. An Indian by the name of Thompson McKinney was buried there. This Indian was a pretty intelligent Indian and died when he was fifty years of age with pneumonia. This man was a leader of part of the Choctaws in their politics. This Indian has been buried and his grave has been left in this spot for fifty-eight years. The covering that was put over this

Indian's grave has been there for fifty-four years. This place was called the Thompson McKinney burying ground.

There is another Indian graveyard about seven miles southwest of Wilburton. There are about thirty-two graves in this place. They had been there for a long time, because trees have come up and grown all over this burying ground. The graves are leveled to a ground level. There are no names of the people recorded, whose bodies are buried in these Indian cemeteries. In the early days the Indians did not place anything on the graves that gave the name or any thing about the person who had died and been buried there.

My father was in this country during the Civil War. He told me he was here with Green McCurtain's own son, by the name of Jack McCurtain. Green McCurtain was Governor of the Choctaw Tribe. The Indian Governor owned and operated a ranch which is now known as Lime Stone Prairie.

My father was in command of an Indian regiment during the Civil War. In 1863, Green McCurtain, Governor of the Choctaw Indians told my father that he had instructions from the Government to enlist a regiment of Indians for service. My father was put in charge of this regiment. They moved from the Territory back to east Arkansas and had a battle

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with the Yankees at what was called Oak Hill. My father was shot in this battle, he got his right eye knocked out of place.

Jack McCurtain had a cattle ranch in this country and when my father brought his Indian regiment back to the Territory. The Yankee soldiers followed the Indian regiment back to the ranch in this territory and had a little fight near the McCurtain ranch. However the War was over and my father settled in the Choctaw Nation. He had ten thousand dollars in Confederate money but of course that was no good after the War.

There were, in the early day, two political factions in this country when they started to select their officers for the tribe. There were lots of arguments among members of the tribe. One faction decided to kill out enough of the other side so they could have control without much opposition. There were four Indian men called the Fraziers who were killed by the opposing faction. They were killed and left dead for several days. Then their bodies were gathered up and one great grave was made and all the bodies were placed in one grave. The Choctaw law finally captured three of the Indians who had helped to do the killings. They were tried at the old Indian Court House, which was located

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then southwest of Wilburton, and were found guilty and executed with the sheriff's six shooter. These three bodies were then carried to a place beside the large grave of the other four whom they had killed. The three were placed in a single grave by themselves.

The Federal Government then took over the tribe and placed them under the laws and management of the white men.