

LOONEY, GEORGE

INTERVIEW

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Grace Kelley,
Field Worker
June 28, 1937.

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Interview with George Looney
Route 1. Weleeka, Oklahoma
Born February 6,
Father-Joe Siah Looney
Mother-Mattie Rainey

THE JOURNEY TO THE INDIAN TERRITORY BY CREEKS

Chili McIntosh was a Chief but not the same person as William nor J. R.

When Chili started to immigrate they got somewhere down the Mississippi River. The boat was no good and sank. A lot of lives were lost; some of them helped the others who couldn't swim out of the water. The ones who could swim worked all night saving the others. What was left took the trail on west to the Indian Territory. They had the ~~smallpox~~, measles, and other diseases which killed a lot more of them on the way. They were awful^{ly} weak from the lack of food. There were no stores to get food; some had corn in sacks. They would stop to rest for two or three days, then journey on. While resting they would parch the corn and make coffee of it as there was no coffee among them. They would pound it up into coarser particles and make sofkey. There was plenty of fresh meat but a lack of bread, salt, pepper, baking powder, and beverages. As they were

going through the woods and crossing rivers they killed and caught the meats of different kinds. The rivers, creeks, and ponds were pure and clear, as there were no dead bodies nor cities to pollute them, so they had good water wherever they found it. Sometimes they found good springs of water.

When they finally got to this country they were not used to the climate and didn't get used to it for quite a while. They worried for there were a lot of deaths occurred when they first came to the new country. They started to settle, and settled close together in villages, because they were afraid of the wild animals. They built log houses and made furniture to go in them. They had a prop to lock the door from the inside but didn't need to lock it from the outside because the women folk didn't leave home at all, but stayed at home for fear the fierce wild animals in this country would eat them.

Each family cleared up about an acre of the land and planted squash, flour, flint and Mexican Blue corn. When they got more land cleared they planted pumpkins, when they got mature they cut them up and dried them

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for winter use. When the corn (flint) was just after the milk stage it was put in a pot of boiling water and cooked until done, shelled, dried in the sun or shade, put in a sack and kept for winter. The men would kill deer and cut them in thin pieces which were dried; beef was done in the same way. They couldn't can as they do now for they didn't have anything to work with.

They made tables, chairs, and cabinets or cupboards. The chair bottoms were made out of Hickory sapling bark woven together. Another way to make a chair seat was to soak cowhide, deer, bear, or buffalo hide, to get it soft, cut it to fit with holes on the corners and strips to go under to hold it on. Put it on a little tight. When it gets dry it is firm.

CUPBOARD

They cut the tree and split it into boards and made a cupboard that hung on the wall like a box. As they had no, or not many, nails they used wooden pegs instead. They had a tool to bore a hole that was a piece of steel with sharp edges on one end. They made a hole and drove pegs in the side of the box to

hold the shelves in.

WOODEN BOWL, SPOON, DIPPER, AND FORKS.

Their wooden bowls were like the wooden mixing bowls you can buy now to make bread in. They used the Box Elder to make the cooking things as it was easy to cut and make into the shape they needed.

The kettles were of brass that they brought with them; they didn't have any iron ones; all were of brass.

CORN SHUCK HORSE COLLARS

To make a horse collar they'd soak corn shucks to make them easy to braid. After they were braided they used a wooden needle with some twisted grass for thread.

RICE PLANTATION

A few had little patches of rice; there was one two miles west of my house which would be about eight southeast of Henryetta, on Bad Creek.

The man who could buy wheat seed was a man with a lot of money; and he would have just a little patch.

~~There wasn't any wheat or wheat flour for the most of~~
them so there wasn't any white bread for them, just corn bread.

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The women would get up early in the morning and pound the flour corn to make meal for the corn bread. They had a hollowed piece of tree and pestle to pound the corn with.

HOME MADE GLOVES AND SOCKS

The women folk used to make gloves out of sheep wool and socks, too, were knitted. When cotton came in they planted a few rows, picked it and took the seeds out by hand. Then it was carded into bats to make quilts, some had spinning wheels to make thread but I think the Government furnished them some thread.

TO MAKE BLUE DUMPLINGS

Take wood ashes sifted good and fine and pour into water and stir, pour flour corn in, when water is thick the corn is ready to wash the husks off, wash four or five times, pour into the mortar and beat, then it is ready to make into blue dumplings.

Clean some corn shucks and burn them, mix with the corn meal. One teaspoon to the half gallon. Have some water boiling, mix the dumplings until you can make a ball of them and drop into the boiling water and cook until done.

CREEK CARVING AND SMOOTHING OF FURNITURE

They had a tool made of steel which they sharpened by whittling on a rock. They carved on the table and chair legs with it. Flint rocks were used to smooth the boards, it took a light stroke or holes would be made where they weren't wanted. Dad used broken glass but they didn't have glass in the early days.

WOODEN HINGES

They had doors that were fastened on by wooden hinges. A log of the wall extended and a hole was bored with the tool or piece of iron with the sharpened edges. The door was made with a log extending so it would fit just below or above the wall log. A hole was bored in that and a peg was put through the holes making a hinge similar to our metal hinge with a pin to pull out.

All this was about a hundred years ago, before the country was sectionized, up until the towns developed and the people were getting civilized. They have progressed in the modern way until all of this is done away with. The cooking will last the longest of any of the Indian ways.