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Joe Southern, Interviewer
Indian-Pioneer History
August 20, 1937

An interview with Solomon Carnes of Bentley, Oklahoma, a fullblood Choctaw Indian, as to the disposition of the shipment or removal of Mississippi Choctaws to Atoka, Indian Territory. Age 57 years of age.

Solomon Carnes, a native fullblood Choctaw Indian, who lives near Bentley, Oklahoma, born December 27, 1880, states: In 1898 Congress, under the Treaty made with the Choctaw and the Chickasaws, passed an act allowing all Mississippi Choctaw Indians that remained in all other states to move into the Choctaw-Chickasaw country and reside for one year. Under this agreement they were allowed to allot and have equal rights as to the allotment of lands as to the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nation.

In 1903 there were about 450 Choctaws under the supervision of the United States Indian Agency established at Muskogee. The Mississippi Choctaws were loaded into box cars in the state of Mississippi and shipped to and unloaded at Atoka, under the supervision of W. H. Angel as Supervisor, Leon Harkins as Field Superintendent and Peter Maytubby as Choctaw Indian Police. These Mississippi Choctaws were unloaded and

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established in camps three miles southwest of Atoka, near what is known as the Mary Ann Brown spring.

This camp was established in August, 1903, for the purpose of locating these Mississippi Indians on their homestead allotment in and around what is now Atoka County. The expense for food at this camp and other expenses were defrayed by the United States Indian Department located at Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Leon Harkins, as Field Supervisor, would take the heads of these families and drive out over the country and show them different lands that were unallotted, for the purpose of helping them make decisions from among the different locations as to their homestead allotment.

The camp was kept intact for four months as these different heads of families made decisions of where they wanted to allot. They were supplied with a tent, cross-cut saw, ax, wedges, hoes, and other tools, also thirty days of groceries, and they moved out on their homestead allotments near some spring or live stream of water, where they could undertake to clear or fence and build houses on these lands for the purpose of establishing permanent homes there.

Their surplus land allotments were taken in different localities and were small tracts that were unallotted by other Indians. In 1909 they were allowed to sell at different times through the United States Indian Department for the purpose of building homes, fencing land for farming purposes, buying teams and livestock for the purpose of improving permanent homes on their allotment or homestead.

In 1909, W. H. Reynolds was appointed District Agent for these different Indians of Atoka, Coal and Pontotoc Counties with headquarters at Atoka. Contracts were entered into between building contractors and the allottee with W. H. Reynolds acting as agent for these Indians, for fencing lands and building houses, digging wells, and making other improvements for these different Choctaw Indians.

These improvements were made from blueprint specifications and were awarded to the lowest bidder on the work and the contract for the work was made between the Indian and the contractor but had to be approved by the Indian Department at the Muskogee office of the Superintendent for the Five Civilized Tribes.