

CHITWOOD, A. W.

INTERVIEW

#6778

491

LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

#6778

492

CHITWOOD, A. M.

INTERVIEW.

Field worker's name Joe Southern

This report made on (date) July 20, 193 7

1. This legend was
secured from (name) A. M. Chitwood

Address Atoka, Oklahoma.

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. origin and history of legend or story Life and business 1874 to

1937 in Choctaw Nation - now Atoka County, Oklahoma.

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank
sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets
attached _____

An Interview with A. M. Chitwood, Atoka, Oklahoma.

By - Joe Southern - Field Worker.

July 20, 1937.

I was born August 19, 1844, in Hamilton County, Tennessee. I came to the Indian Territory in 1874.

I farmed and hauled lumber from what is now the eastern part of Atoka County to what is now Pontotoc County for the Indians and white settlers.

In 1889 I established the first shingle mill in Atoka, on the bank of Rock Creek, where the Atoka and Nelson wagon roads crossed. I manufactured what was known as cut shingles. Power was from a steam boiler. I had a pit dug and filled with water, with a steam pipe from the boiler to the pit to heat and boil the water. The pit was filled with blocks cut and made ready by hand from native pine timber. There was a heavy block with a knife blade attached to cut shingles with, with steam power. Blocks were laid on a hickory table and held in place with grabs or hooks. A block with a knife was in a frame and would slide up and down to cut the shingles. From three to five thousand shingles was a days work. The price of the shingles was from \$1.75 to \$2.50 per thousand. The market was to

-2-

Choctaw Indians and others in what is now Atoka County.

When the United States Commissioner's Court was established in Atoka, I was appointed U. S. Deputy Marshal and served for five years in the Atoka District.

I have farmed and been in the sawmill and shingle business since. I have three boys running shingle mills at present.

In early days the woods and ranges were full of wild game and live stock was owned by the Choctaw Indians and others.

Money was easy to accumulate. As live stock had free range, each man had an ear mark or brand to distinguish the ownership.

I have raised my family in what is now Atoka County and have prospered here. There has been many changes in the up-building of Atoka County and Atoka as to schools, churches, lodges and buildings, banking, farming, and other business.

Since I came to Atoka in early days, clothing was manufactured and shipped to the Choctaw Nation from other states as were wagons, harness, farming and mining machinery, buggies, saddles, cook and heating stoves, cooking utensils,

bedding, bedsteads, blankets, shawls, sewing machines and jewelry.

Schools were sponsored and run by the Choctaw Government and missionary work by the United States Government.

Choctaw courts and Government were sponsored from permits and royalties collected within the boundaries of the Nation and private donations.